



THE CALIFORNIA - ISRAEL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
2021 REPORT & EVALUATION




EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor of California
United States of America


BENJAMIN NETANYAHU
Prime Minister
State of Israel

Contents

Executive Summary	Page 1
Overview	Page 2
Results	Page 3
Impact	Page 4
Recommendations	Page 4
Full Text of Agreement	Page 5

Acknowledgements

The California - Israel Strategic Partnership agreement is the result of many years of work by several key individuals including members of the Office of California Governor Jerry Brown, the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Consulates General of Israel in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Today, California's Israeli immigrant community is looking to the future to continue to strengthen the special alliance between their old home and new through this unique framework.



Members of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus pose with Governor Brown and Prime Minister Netanyahu.



A delegation of Israeli firefighters visit California to assist with devastating wildfires.

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Executive Summary

From 2011 to 2014, the movement to boycott, divest, and sanction (BDS) Israel was gaining momentum. A highly organized and systematic campaign to delegitimize Israel and discriminate against Israelis around the world was beginning to grow in popularity and strength, including and especially in the United States. Most disturbing, this movement began to metastasize like cancer and spread beyond college campuses to city councils, state capitols, labor unions, and shareholder meetings.

Organizational and individual supporters of Israel focused on responding to a flood of misinformation driven by boycott supporters with facts, data, and information of their own. These educational initiatives had some effect but were demonstrably unable to stop the growth of misinformation campaigns targeting Israel.

A new solution was needed.

Rather than fight on the turf created by BDS, fight misinformation with education, a new idea was developed by Israel and California to establish a new organized framework of cooperation promoting joint innovation and exchanges.

The result was the creation of a historic memorandum of understanding signed by the Governor of California and the Prime Minister of Israel to promote cooperation and exchanges.

This MOU was the first of its kind for Israel and California. It turned out to be an innovative instrument leading to a cascade of local partnerships, programs, and unique opportunities for engagement.

This report provides a detailed analysis of the California-Israel memorandum of understanding, an evaluation of results, and a series of recommendations for future development.



Overview

On March 5th, 2014, Governor Jerry Brown of the State of California and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of the State of Israel signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) establishing a strategic partnership for enhanced economic relations, joint innovation, and mutual exchanges.

While Israel and California have benefited from informal cooperation for decades, this new strategic partnership strengthened, deepened, and broadened the relationship based on **three key pillars**:



**Intergovernmental
Cooperation**



**Innovation & Economic
Development**



**Academic & Cultural
Exchanges**

The strategic partnership agreement highlights seven key areas for cooperation, including:



**Water Conservation
& Management**



**Alternative Energy
& Clean Tech**



**Health
& Biotechnology**



Cybersecurity



Arts & Culture



Education



**Agricultural
Technologies**

Importantly, the strategic partnership encourages **sister city agreements** and other forms of **local cooperation**.



Jerusalem

Los Angeles

Next: Results & Impact

Results

As highlighted in the previous section, the California-Israel strategic partnership framework promoted intergovernmental cooperation, economic development, and academic cooperation. As a result, the following additional state and local partnerships were enacted leading to several concrete positive outcomes:



Governor's Office of Business Development R&D Partnership

Partnership agreement to promote foreign direct investment and technology partnerships between Israel and California.



Los Angeles County – Israel Partnership for Sustainability

Partnership program to promote cooperation between Los Angeles County and Israel in the area of sustainability.

Result: A delegation from L.A. County visited Israel to learn more about water conservation and management.



The City of Los Angeles– Israel Cleantech Task Force

A task force has been established within the City of Los Angeles to promote cleantech innovation between the City and Israel.

Result: A delegation from Israel visited the City of L.A. to discuss water conservation and management with leading officials.



Israel – West Hollywood HIV/AIDS Task Force

A task force has been established within the City of West Hollywood to promote best practices and education on HIV/AIDS between the City and Israel.

Result: Several leading biotech scientists visited the City of West Hollywood to educate the public about Israel's effort to eradicate HIV.



Beverly Hills – Israel Strategic Partnership

A strategic partnership has been established between Israel and the City of Beverly Hills promoting several areas of mutual interest.

Result: The City hosted conferences focused on water conservation and cyber security and welcomed several delegations from Israel.



Israel – California Partnership for Joint Stem Cell Research

Two agreements were signed between Israel and the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine on joint stem cell research. One with Israel's Ministry of Economy to promote private sector R&D and another with the Ministry of Science promoting joint scientific research.



Israel – SCAG City to City Partnership

SCAG established a city to city partnership with Israel's national municipal authority MASHAM.

Result: A delegation of Mayors from Israel visited Southern California to examine urban development and community diversity.



California Department of Agriculture Visit to Israel

CA Secretary of Agriculture leads agricultural delegation to Israel to learn about climate-smart water and climate-smart agricultural technologies such as low-flow irrigation, sensors/drone technology to monitor crops, and evaluate the future of water efficiency.



California Secretary of Agriculture, Karen Ross, visits Kibbutz Hatzerim in Southern Israel.

Next: Impact & Recommendations

Impact

The California - Israel strategic partnership has led to both a qualitative and quantitative transformation of Californians' perspective of and relationship with Israel, including the following:

1. **New Local and State Engagement:** the California - Israel Strategic Partnership established a clear roadmap for engagement on issues of mutual concern and interest and opened new doors of opportunity with state and local partners.
2. **Greater Political Acceptance:** prior to the signing of the California - Israel Strategic Partnership, many local and state officials and staffers who had little to no experience with Israel were often reticent about engaging with Israeli officials and the government. They viewed Israel as a politically controversial. After the signing of the agreement, they began to view Israel as more mainstream, less controversial, and as a potential source of solutions to common problems.
3. **Enhanced Public Education:** following the signing of the California - Israel strategic partnership and subsequent agreements, there were hundreds of positive media stories that greatly contributed to public education about Israel and the its potential solutions for America's toughest challenges.

Recommendations

The California - Israel strategic partnership has been in effect for several years, and after significant success and the creation of many future opportunities, we recommend the following:

1. California and Israel should prioritize and continue to explore the interest areas defined in the memorandum of understanding.
2. Given the frequent change of representatives from both governments, the local Israeli immigrant community should be encouraged to serve as the anchor for preserving and promoting engagement within the framework of the memorandum of understanding.
3. The California-Israel MOU model should be replicated in other states to promote broader and deeper ties at the state and local levels of government.
4. While anti-BDS laws in several states have done an adequate job of creating firewalls preventing the proliferation of efforts to delegitimize Israel, an MOU between Israel and U.S. states promotes partnership, investment, and cooperation, all of which amounts to a substantive reversal of the boycott movement.

Memorandum of Understanding

**On the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership for
Joint Innovation, Exchanges and Cooperation**

Between

The Government of the State of California, United States of America

And

The Government of the State of Israel

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA (hereinafter "the Participants") RECOGNIZE THAT:

WHEREAS two-way trade between Israel and California totaled over \$4 billion in 2013 –
one of the largest two-way trade relationships between Israel and a U.S. State; and

WHEREAS the State of California and the State of Israel share close ties and are global
leaders in the alternative energy, environmental technology and other technology-based
industry sectors; and

WHEREAS the State of California is home to the largest in-state innovation network in
the United States, which offers technology-commercialization opportunities for the State of
Israel; and

WHEREAS the Participants seek to expand the current level of cooperation between Israel
and California in, but not limited to, alternative energy, environmental technology, health,
food and agriculture and other technology based industry sectors, business innovation,
research and development.

THEREFORE, IT IS DECLARED AS FOLLOWS:

The Participants hereby sign this Memorandum of Understanding for the purposes of establishing a formal relationship between them to foster economic cooperation and economic development, facilitate joint industrial research and development and enhance business relationships and educational opportunities to foster job creation and incubate global solutions from joint California-Israel innovation initiatives.

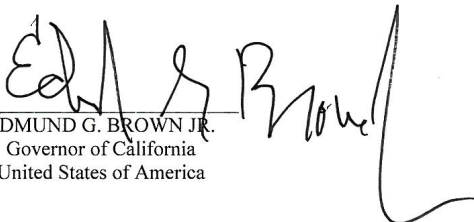
To achieve these aims:

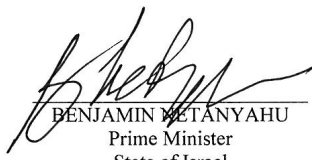
1. The Participants intend to seek to convene bilateral, interagency and inter-ministerial working groups with international expertise to coordinate initiatives.
2. The Participants plan to facilitate collaborations between Israeli and Californian entrepreneurs and researchers through (though not exclusively limited to) the California innovation hub (iHub) network – a network consisting of self-funded, collaborative regional innovation clusters, uniting government, universities, foundations, national labs and the private sector.
3. The Participants intend to support and encourage their people and competent authorities to further develop interpersonal contacts and exchanges and to promote mutual cooperation, understanding and friendship by encouraging ad hoc task forces, trade delegations and professional exchanges between Israel and California in key sectors including, but not limited to:
 - a. Water Conservation and Management
 - b. Alternative Energy and related Clean Technologies
 - c. Health and Biotechnology Solutions
 - d. CyberSecurity
 - e. Arts & Culture
 - f. Education
 - g. Agricultural Technologies

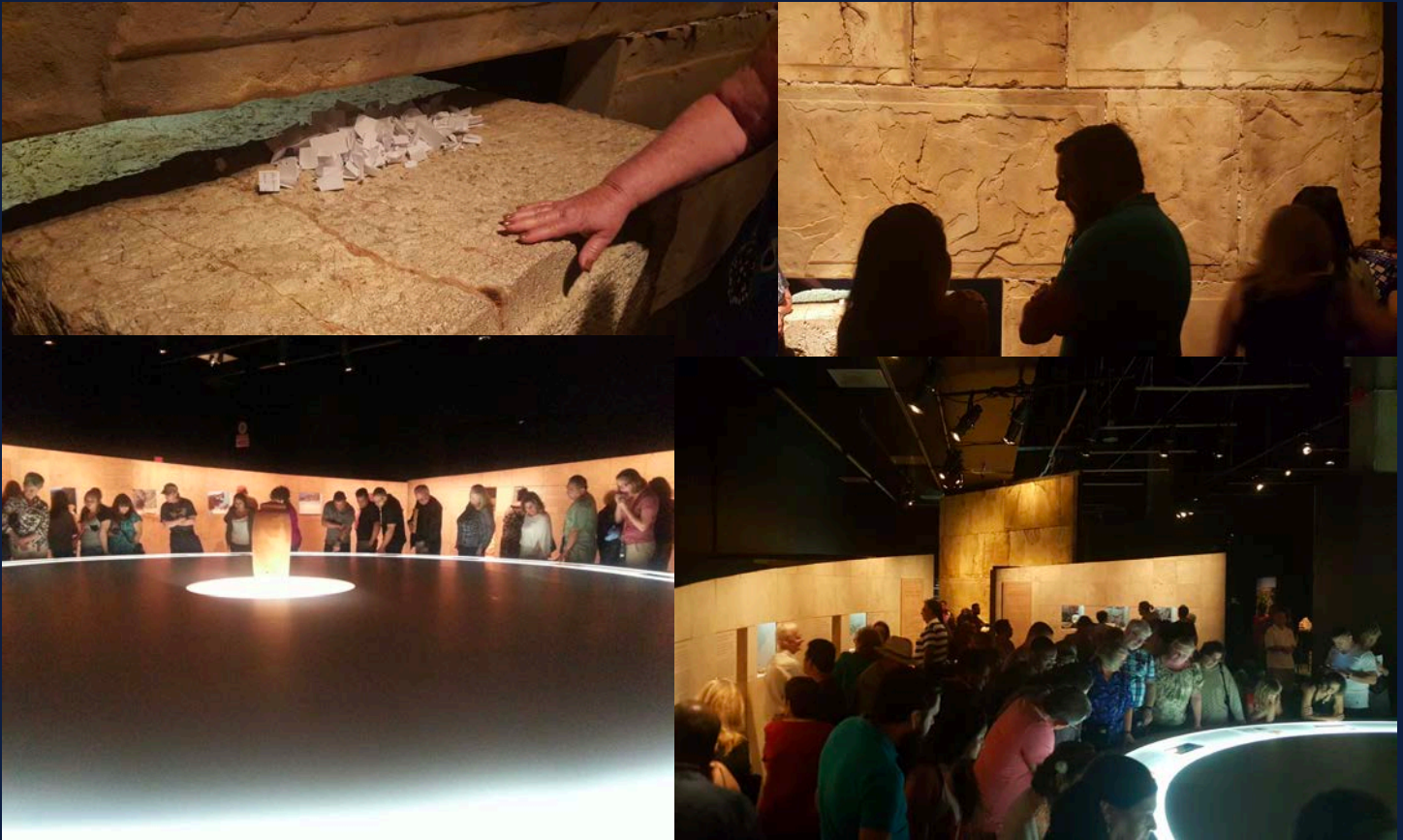
4. The Participants intend to support and encourage the creation of public-private partnerships between Californian and Israeli entities in the areas of economic development, social entrepreneurship, or academic research related to the above activities.
5. The Participants intend to support and encourage the strengthening of sister city programs between Israeli and California cities, which are designed to enhance opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges, economic partnerships and social entrepreneurship on the local level.
6. The Participants intend to encourage collaboration between Californian and Israeli universities, public and private research institutions.

This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to become effective on the date it is signed and does not create any legally binding rights or obligations for either Participant.

This Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Mountain View, California, United States, on the 5th day of March 2014, corresponding to the 3rd day of Adar II of 5774 in the Hebrew calendar.


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The Israeli Antiquities Authority hosted a special Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit at the California Science Center, an official museum of the State of California.