



**The Jacob Blaustein  
Institute for Desert Research (BIDR)**  
Ben Gurion University of the Negev (BGU), Sede Boqer Campus

**The 2010 Annual ILTER Coordinating Committee Meeting and ILTER Symposium will take place in Sede Boqer, ISRAEL, from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2010 to Friday, 3 September, 2010.**

\* Pre meeting tours available from Wednesday, August 25 till Sunday, August 29, 2010

\* Post meeting hike available from Friday, September 3 till Sunday, September 5, 2010

#### Contact Information

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Annual meeting and Symposium Secretariat

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For more information please write to Ms. Noa Angel at [LTERisrael@gmail.com](mailto:LTERisrael@gmail.com).

#### **MEETING VENUE**

The Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research are situated on the Sede Boqer campus of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 50 km south of Beer Sheva, Israel.

Overlooking the beautiful Zin Wadi, the Sede Boqer campus serves as home to several institutions, among them another university research institute: the Ben-Gurion Research Center, a residential high school for environmental education, and a desert field school.

It is also the burial site of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister and a great believer in the potential of the desert.

For a map of the area: <http://ramat-negev.org.il/en/main.php?m=1677>

For tourist information on the Ramat Hanegev area : <http://ramat-negev.org.il/en/main.php?m=1175&s1=1593&ban=1>

#### **GENERAL TIMELINE**

<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Pre-meeting tours	Jerusalem and the Dead Sea	Aug 25 - Aug 29
Science meeting	Sede Boqer campus	Aug 29 - Aug 31
AGM	Sede Boqer campus	Sept 1 - Sept 3
Post-meeting hike	Desert area	Sept 3 - Sept 5

*Ramat Hanegev highlands*

## PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

### I. Pre meeting tours to Dead Sea and Jerusalem

	Wednesday Aug. 25, 2010	Thursday Aug. 26, 2010	Friday Aug. 27, 2010	Saturday Aug 28, 2010	Sunday Aug 29, 2010
AM		Dead Sea and Judea Desert	Jerusalem Tour	Jerusalem Tour	Free time in Tel Aviv
PM	Coach from Jerusalem to Arad, Judea Desert				Forestry Excursion and Coach to Sede Boqer campus
Evening Event	Arad hotel				
	Jerusalem hotel	Jerusalem hotel	Tel Aviv hotel		

### II. ILTER AGM

	Sunday Aug. 29, 2010	Monday Aug. 30, 2010	Tuesday Aug. 31, 2010	Wednesday Sept. 1, 2010	Thursday, Sept. 2, 2010	Friday, Sept. 3, 2010
AM		Science meeting	Science meeting	Regional meetings	Business meeting and sub- committee meetings	Business meeting
PM	(free) Forestry Excursion and Coach to Sede Boqer campus		Excursion			(free) ride to Airport OR
Evening Event	Welcome Reception	Local and International Get-Together	Bedouin Feast	Film Screening (outdoors)	Festive concluding dinner	Post-meeting hiking tour

### III. Post meeting hike

	Friday Sep 3, 2010	Saturday Sep 4, 2010	Sunday Sep 5, 2010
AM	Business meeting	Desert hike (Ein Akev Oasis)	Desert hike, Spa and Biblical Beer Sheva
PM	Desert hike (Scenic Mt. Tsaror)	Desert hike (Ramon Crater)	Departure
Evening Event	Sleeping outdoors	Sleeping outdoors	

***This program is subject to changes.*** A more detailed program will be posted later on.

*Please check our website periodically.*

***Please note that the pre- and post-meeting activities are dependent on a minimum number of participants.***

## REGISTRATION AND FEES

**Early** registration for the meeting, as well as for the pre- and post-meeting activities shall be conducted online (<http://lter.bgu.ac.il/lter.aspx>) **from January 15 till March 31, 2010 at reduced rates.**

**Regular Registration will continue until 1 June 2010.** Following registration, payment should be effected for one or more of the following packages by downloading a Payment Form from the website and faxing the payment details form to Fax No.:+ 972-8-6596771 **by the above deadlines.** Payment will be accepted via credit-cards/bank money transfer/cheque. The table below lists the various registration types, costs and included features:

Program Section	Fee Includes:
<b>ILTER AGM</b> <b>Basic Registration</b> <b>29.8.10- 3.9.10</b> <b>“Early Birds”</b> <b>Registration Fee:</b> <b>500\$ by 31 March 10</b>  <b>After this date and</b> <b>until 1 June 10: 600\$</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation at Regional meeting, Science meeting &amp; Business meeting</li> <li>▪ Free ride from the airport to the meeting venues, and back, on selected times (see below)</li> <li>▪ Forestry excursion on the way to Sede Boqer on Aug. 29</li> <li>▪ Welcome Reception on the evening of Aug. 29</li> <li>▪ Accommodation (5 nights) at double occupancy (100 \$ extra for single occupancy) at the meeting venues (guest house/hostel level).</li> <li>▪ Full board from the evening of Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> until midday of Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup></li> <li>▪ Meeting material and souvenir</li> <li>▪ Part-day excursions and evening social activities during the meeting (<i>Avdat world heritage site, forestry tour, desert habitats, Kibbutz, scenic walks and more</i>)</li> <li>▪ Festive departure dinner on the evening of Sept. 2</li> </ul>
<b>Basic Registration for</b> <b>accompanying person</b> <b>29.8.10- 3.9.10</b> <b>Fee: 400\$</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Free ride from the airport to the meeting venues, and back, on selected times (see below)</li> <li>▪ Forestry excursion on the way to Sede Boqer on Aug. 29</li> <li>▪ Welcome Reception on the evening of Aug. 29</li> <li>▪ Accommodation (5 nights) at double occupancy at the meeting venues (guest house/hostel level)</li> <li>▪ Full board from the evening of Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> until midday of Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup></li> <li>▪ Part-day excursions and evening social activities during the meeting (<i>Avdat world heritage site, forestry tour, desert habitats, Kibbutz, scenic walks and more</i>)</li> <li>▪ Festive departure dinner on the evening of Sept. 2</li> <li>▪ Participation at Science meeting (optional)</li> </ul>
<b>Judea Desert &amp;</b> <b>Dead Sea</b> <b>pre-meeting tour</b> <b>25.8.10-26.8.10</b> <b>Fee: 180\$</b> <i>(only 150\$ for Jerusalem</i> <i>tour participants)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pickup from airport/Tel-Aviv, bus ride to the Judea Desert ,Dead Sea and back to Jerusalem (<i>Arrival at Jerusalem on the evening of Aug. 26</i>)</li> <li>▪ Accommodation (1 night at Arad) at double occupancy (<i>4 stars hotel</i>). 50\$ extra for single occupancy.</li> <li>▪ All meals and admittance to all tourist sites (see full program)</li> <li>▪ Guidance by experienced scientists and naturalists</li> <li>▪ <b>Minimum number of participants: 25. Pre-registration ends on 31 March 2010</b></li> </ul>
<b>Jerusalem &amp; Tel-Aviv</b> <b>pre-meeting tour</b> <b>26.8.10-29.8.10</b> <b>Fee: 480\$</b> <i>(only 450\$ for Dead Sea</i> <i>tour participants)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pickup from Jerusalem, bus ride to Tel-Aviv and to Sede Boqer (conference venues) on Aug. 29<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Accommodation (2 night in a scenic Jerusalem hotel, 1 night in Tel-Aviv) at double occupancy (guest house/hostel level). 100\$ extra for single occupancy.</li> <li>▪ All meals except lunch at free time, and admittance to all tourist sites (see full program)</li> <li>▪ Guidance by experienced tour guides, naturalists and scientists</li> <li>▪ <b>Minimum number of participants: 25. Pre-registration ends on 31 March 2010</b></li> </ul>
<b>Exploring the Negev</b> <b>Desert</b> <b>post-meeting hiking trip</b> <b>3.9.10-5.9.10</b> <b>Fee: 200\$</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 nights camping in the desert (optional sleeping bag &amp; field mattress rental for 50\$)</li> <li>▪ Full board from the evening of Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> until lunch on Sept. 5<sup>th</sup></li> <li>▪ Admittance to all tourist sites (see full program below)</li> <li>▪ Guidance by experienced tour guides, naturalists and scientists</li> <li>▪ <b>Minimum number of participants: 15. Pre-registration ends on 31 March 2010</b></li> </ul>

## CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite offers of papers for the ILTER Symposium on August 31- September 1, 2010. This year we are looking for papers on “*Large Scale Ecology*”. This includes science that was done in LTER sites over a long period of time, or network research. We will also have a 2 poster sessions: one on research and one describing LTER networks or LTER sites. Please send short abstracts (not more than 200 words) to Manuel Mass [maass@oikos.unam.mx](mailto:maass@oikos.unam.mx) (science committee) with a copy to Noa Angel at [LTERisrael@gmail.com](mailto:LTERisrael@gmail.com). **Deadline: 31 March, 2010.**

## TOURS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE MEETING:

There will be two pre-meeting tours (to the Judea Desert & Dead Sea, and to Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv) and one post-meeting tour (desert hiking trip) available for participants, upon pre-registration. See more information at the end of this circular. The pre-meeting trip will take place on the condition that we will have a minimum of 25 participants. In addition there will be short trips early morning (5-8 am) twice during the meeting and there will be a cultural visit to a Bedouin village on Tuesday afternoon. The hike after the meeting will be about 10 km a day and will include sleeping outdoors and possibly some hot hours. The post-meeting excursion hike will take place on the condition that we will have a minimum of 15 participants.

## INFO ON ISRAEL (and a remark on personal safety and security issues...)

You may find below some general information on Israel. For further information, please check the following sites:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA> and

[http://www.tourism.gov.il/Tourism\\_Eng](http://www.tourism.gov.il/Tourism_Eng)

*Is it safe to travel to Israel? You probably asked yourself this question or heard it from friends and family members. No place in the world is 100% safe but Israel is a relatively safe country to visit. In the past few years the security situation in Israel has been increasingly calm since the end of the Intifada. The chance of getting caught up in an act of terror in Israel is extremely low.*

*It should be stressed that the Gaza Strip, which is occasionally on the news, is at the south-western tip of Israel, far from the tour and vacation sites (including Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem etc.) and thus there is no reason for anxiety in this respect. In particular, Sde-Boker campus is located in the Negev Desert far from any conflict area, and is a tranquil and beautiful academic and educational campus.*



## VISA REQUIREMENTS

All visitors to Israel must hold a passport that is valid for at least six months from the date they enter the country. People with no nationality must hold a valid laissez passer, as well as a visa back to the country that issued it. Israel has agreements for the abolition of visa requirements with over 60 countries.

For all other countries, a VISITOR'S VISA should be pre-arranged to enter Israel. The process of obtaining this visa takes at least several weeks, and therefore should be started as soon as possible at the nearest Israeli mission. **All participants are responsible for making their own visa arrangements.**

For a list of Israeli Missions worldwide and to find out whether you require a Visa: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Sherut/IsraeliAbroad/Continents/>

Please note that, if a visa is necessary, the applicant is often required, in addition to filling up a formal application form (**hyperlink to form**), to present some proof of funds, copy of round-trip plane tickets, and other guarantees. For more details, please contact the Consular Section of the nearest Israeli mission.

The meeting organizers will be happy to provide an official letter confirming your attendance at the meeting to assist in the process of obtaining a Visa, provided that you have fully registered (including payment).

## INTERNET ACCESS & COMPUTER FACILITIES

Wireless connection is available in the main conference hall area, using a code that will be provided by the organizers upon request, on site. There will also be some computers available on site, as well as a printer, for emergency printouts.

In addition, there is a computer room available on campus for the use of the participants of the meeting. The computer room will be open for a few hours each day, according to a schedule published on site. Currently, there is no internet access in the Sde Boker Field School or guest house.

## CURRENCY AND CREDIT CARD

The Israeli currency is the New Israel Shekel (NIS, or shekel for short).

Foreign currency of all kinds may be exchanged at the airport, banks, post offices, most hotels or licensed exchange agencies in large cities. The rates vary from place to place, and banks charge a commission.

Holders of international credit cards can withdraw local or foreign currency at banks which accept their credit cards. There are Automated Teller Machines outside most banks.

Major credit cards – American Express, Diners, Visa, Mastercard/Access/Eurocard – are widely accepted in Israeli restaurants, stores, hotels, museums, etc.

Please note that there are no banking services at Sede Boqer. Thus, you are advised to change cash before arriving to the meeting venue.

## WEATHER CONDITIONS

It's the end of summer in Israel in August/ September. Israel is a land of bright sunshine, and the amounts of light and radiation are among the highest in the world. This ensures a good suntan, but requires appropriate protection...

When you arrive in Tel Aviv it will most likely be hot. However, as the conference will take place at the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, which is located in the Negev desert highlands. Thus, it may be cool in the early mornings and evenings (15°C-20°C) but hot during the day (25°C-35 °C).



You will want to consider that when packing for the trip and dressing in the morning. All the meetings will take place in air-conditioned facilities and all busses in Israel have air-conditioning.

## GENERAL TIPS

- ❖ Packing Suggestions: There are several out-door activities planned throughout the course of the conference. **Therefore, please be sure to pack a pair of decent walking shoes, a swimming suit, a hat and warm clothes.**
- ❖ Sede Boker is a small and isolated campus. Clothing is extremely informal. Entertainment is limited. You may well find it useful to bring with you a supply of reading matter, although we intend to keep you busy during the meeting!

## ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Please note that the basic registration includes accommodation and full board for the duration of the meeting (see more details under “Registration and Fees” section).

Accommodation is provided at the **Sede Boqer Guest House**, **Sede Boqer Field School** and/or the **University Guest House**, all located within walking distance of the meeting venues, in Midreshet Ben Gurion.

The **Sede Boqer Field School** operates two buildings which together contain 47 rooms, each room with 6 beds, according to Youth Hostel standards (each room has its own bathroom and shower as well as tea/coffee making facilities). The rooms are air-conditioned. Each building contains a clubroom and classrooms, enabling lectures for groups up to 50 people.

The **Sede Boqer Guesthouse** (“Hamburg house”) contains 20 rooms with 2-4 beds in each room, according to guesthouse standards (each room has its own bathroom and shower as well as tea/coffee making facilities). There are double rooms and also family rooms (with 4 beds). The rooms are air-conditioned, with facilities for preparing hot drinks.

The **BIDR Guesthouse** is a convenient hostel, adjacent to the Sede Boqer Guesthouse. The rooms are air-conditioned, with facilities for preparing hot drinks and an en-suite bathroom and shower.

### Some general notes:

- Check-in time is 2 pm. Check-out time is 9 am. There will be storage facilities on campus during the conference to guard your luggage if necessary.
- A meeting representative will provide you with a key to your room, upon your arrival. If you intend to be arriving at unusual hours, please make sure you coordinate your arrival with the conference organizers.
- Single rooms are available. However, please let us know if you are bringing a partner with you, or if you wish to share a room with a colleague, to cheapen your stay...

## TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

### International Arrival:

The nearest airport is Ben-Gurion Airport (near Tel-Aviv, and coded TLV) in Israel. The airport is situated about 2 hours drive north of the Sede Boqer campus.

Some general tips for international arrivals:

- If you are flying *El Al* to Israel be prepared for a great deal of additional security from the airline employees, and occasionally to have to submit to a search of your belongings. Be sure to arrive at the airport with plenty of time to spare and a letter of invitation to the meeting.
- Make sure you have all your paperwork lined up before you prepare to pass through customs. In contrast to its reputation, Israel is actually a safe country, but that's because Israelis take national security very seriously; please answer all the officials' questions honestly and concisely. Make sure that they are aware that you are traveling to meet a group and are participating in a conference at Ben Gurion University. If you encounter any trouble from Israeli immigration or security forces, please have them call one of the meeting coordinators – Dorit Korine @ 052-3129054 or Noa Angel @ 052-4579900.
- Please inform the organizers of your itinerary, including flight number and expected arrival time.

#### Local Transportation from the airport/Tel-Aviv to Sede Boqer campus:

Depending on the time of arrival, several modes of transportation are available from the airport, either through Be'er Sheva (by bus, train or taxi) or directly to Sede Boqer (via taxi).

#### **By conference bus:**

A conference bus/minibus will be available to take participants to/from the Sede Boqer campus **at no cost** at these times:

- A conference minibus taking participants from the airport, via Tel-Aviv, on Sunday, August 29 at approximately 12:00 pm, passing Tel Aviv at 12:30 (exact details will be given upon registration) to the meeting venues. *Please be sure to register early (online) if you would like to use this service.*
- There will be a conference minibus taking participants from the meeting venues to the airport on Friday, September 3, 2010 at approximately 1 pm (exact details will be given upon registration) to the meeting venues. *Please be sure to register early (online) if you would like to use this service*

#### **By Bus to Beer Sheva/ Sede Boqer:**

- Those arriving at the airport anytime other than between Friday afternoon and Saturday evening (the local Weekend), can take bus number 475 from the airport to the Tel Aviv Central Bus Station (in Hebrew: "Takhana Merkazit") in Tel-Aviv. From there take **bus number 370 to Beer Sheva**.
- Alternatively, bus number 222 from the airport takes you to the Tel-Aviv train station (Arlozorov station). From there **bus number 380 goes directly to Beer Sheva**. Total price of busses from airport to Beer Sheva is around 10\$
- From Beer Sheva to Sede Boqer Campus, see below.  
**Either way, the journey takes 2-2.5 hours.**
- Once a day there is a **bus (number 391)** that goes directly from the Central Bus Station in Tel-Aviv **to Sede Boqer**. It leaves Tel-Aviv at 14:45 on Sundays through Thursdays, and at 13:30 on Fridays.

#### **By Train to Beer Sheva:**

Train transportation is available to Beer Sheva.

At the main exit of terminal 3 (where all international flights land) there is a train station. Take the train one stop to Tel Aviv ("Hagana station") and then change to Beer Sheva. Get out at the last stop (Beer Sheva Central), cross the road and take a taxi or bus to Sede Boqer Campus.

The Israel Railway site is: <http://www.israrail.org.il/english/>

Please remember that there is no train or bus service during the weekend (buses and trains stop Friday at midday and start again at Saturday evening).

- Sunday mornings are extremely busy times and are not recommended as a convenient travel time. Total price of train from airport to Beer Sheva is around \$10

**By bus from Beer Sheva to the Sede Boqer campus:**

From Beer Sheva central bus station, take bus number 060 (platform 4), asking for Midreshet Sede Boqer (Sede Boqer Campus). The journey takes about 50 minutes.

Please make sure to get off at the “Midrasha” and not at the “Sede Boqer kibbutz” station, which is 5 km. north of campus...

The No. 60 local bus operates at a rate of about a bus per hour (sometimes more)... The last number 060 bus leaves Beer Sheva for Sede Boqer at approximately 22:00 hours on Sundays through Thursdays, at 16:00 hours on Fridays, and at 23:00 hours on Saturdays.

**By Taxi to Sede Boqer campus:**

You can take a taxi directly from the airport to Sde Boker for about 150 \$. Please confirm price before departing the airport to avoid any misunderstandings.

Alternatively, you can take a train to Beer-Sheva and a taxi from Beer Sheva for about \$25

**General Travel Tips:**

- ❖ Please bear in mind that there is no public transportation from Friday afternoon to Saturday sunset (the local weekend).
- ❖ If you have an international student card you will usually receive a 10% reduction on the price of tickets.
- ❖ Those arriving on Sunday morning should bear in mind that it is the most crowded day of the week. Travel takes longer, and some buses may fill quickly and refuse to accept additional passengers beyond their quota.

**SUMMARY OF FEES** *(see more detailed information further below)*

	<i>“Early Birds” Registration</i> From 15 January 2010 To 31 March 2010	From 1 April 2010 To 1 June 2010
AGM Basic Registration	<b>500\$</b>	600\$
Judea Desert/Dead Sea (Tour 1)	180\$	250\$ <sup>#2</sup>
Jerusalem & Tel-Aviv (Tour 2)	480\$	550\$ <sup>#2</sup>
Pre-meeting tours (Tours 1&2)	600\$	700\$ <sup>#2</sup>
Post-meeting hike (Tour 3)	200\$ <sup>#1</sup>	220\$ <sup>#1,2</sup>
Registration & all tours (1-3)	<b>1300\$</b>	1520\$
Spouse: Basic Registration	400\$	400\$
Spouse: Registration & all tours (1-3)	<b>1200\$</b>	1320\$
Science meeting only <i>(local participants)</i>	850 NIS	1000 NIS

<sup>#1</sup> additional 50\$ for renting gear (sleeping bag, mattress)

<sup>#2</sup> Tour availability cannot be guaranteed after 31 March 2010. Please secure your place earlier.