

# Academic, Scientific and Administrative Bodies Operating and Managing the MIGAL Research Institute

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## Abstract

The MIGAL—Galilee Research Institute was established in northern Israel as a multidisciplinary academic applied research institute with the primary objective of strengthening scientific excellence in a geographically peripheral region. From its inception, the institute was designed as an integrated framework combining academic research, technological innovation, and regional development. The present study describes the development of the organizational structure and academic governance system of MIGAL and analyzes the roles of the principal academic bodies operating within the institute. These include the Supreme Academic Council, the Internal Academic Council, the Researchers' Forum, and several professional committees responsible for research evaluation and ethical oversight. The results demonstrate that MIGAL operated through a dual institutional structure combining independent academic governance with an administrative framework linked to the regional development authorities. This integrated system enabled the institute to maintain high academic standards while contributing to agricultural innovation, biotechnology development, and environmental research in northern Israel. The findings indicate that the institutional model developed at MIGAL may provide a useful framework for establishing research institutes in peripheral regions seeking to combine scientific excellence with regional development.

## Keywords

Academic Research, Technological Innovation, Peripheral Region Development, Institute Management

## 1. Introduction

The establishment of high-level research institutions in geographically peripheral regions presents significant academic and organizational challenges. Peripheral regions are typically distant from the centers of economy, culture, health, etc. They are also distant from the central academic infrastructure where universities, research funding agencies, and scientific networks are concentrated. Nevertheless, studies of regional innovation systems demonstrate that scientific productivity can develop in such regions when appropriate institutional frameworks and collaborative governance mechanisms are established (Lundvall, 1992; Cooke, 2001; Gunasekara, 2006). The MIGAL—Galilee Research Institute was founded in northern Israel with the objective of strengthening scientific activity in the Galilee region. The institute was designed as a multidisciplinary applied research center combining fundamental research with technological innovation and regional development initiatives (Levanon & Degani, 2025). The conceptual model underlying MIGAL's establishment was based on the assumption that peripheral regions can achieve scientific competitiveness when advanced research infrastructure, academic governance, and cooperation with regional development institutions are structurally integrated. Previous institutional analyses of MIGAL emphasized that the institute developed as a multidisciplinary research framework integrating academic research with applied technological activities and regional innovation systems (Levanon, Degani, & Marchaim, 2025). These studies demonstrated that the institute was structured not merely as a research organization but as a hybrid institutional model linking academic activity with regional socio-economic development. Over time MIGAL established a structured academic governance system composed of several complementary bodies responsible for scientific policy, research evaluation, ethical supervision, and institutional coordination. These bodies included the Supreme Academic Council, the Internal Academic Council, the Researchers' Forum, and specialized committees responsible for research evaluation and ethical oversight. The aim of the present study is to describe the development and institutional structure of these academic bodies, to analyze their roles in supporting the scientific and applied development of the MIGAL Research Institute, and to analyze the impact of this structure and mode of operation on the achievement of the institute's goals: Academic advancement and regional development of the Galilee.

## 2. Methods

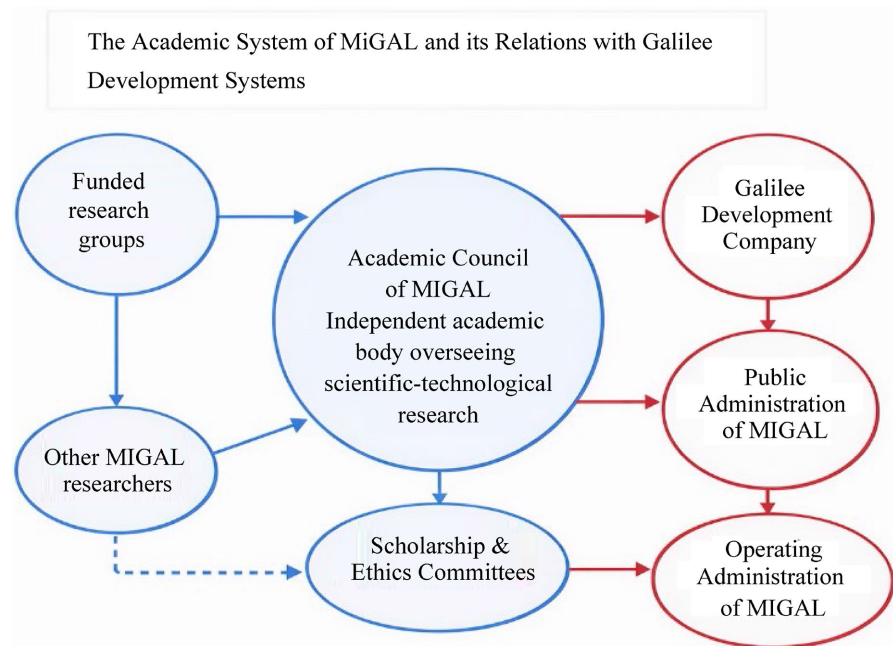
For this study, internal documents of the research institute itself were examined. They included protocols of the bodies listed here: the Supreme Scientific Council, the Internal Scientific Council, the Researchers' Forum, and the MIGAL's management. The external documents reviewed include the archives of the Upper Galilee Regional council, which is the region's municipality and The Galilee Development Company that was the mother company of MIGAL. To understand the

attitude of state institutions to the needs of the Upper Galilee as a peripheral region and the place of MIGAL Research Institute in responding to these needs, the relevant decisions of the Council for Higher Education and the Government of Israel were studied.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Organizational Structure of the MIGAL Research Institute

The organizational framework of MIGAL is based on a dual institutional structure that integrates independent academic governance with an administrative system connected to regional development organizations (Degani & Levanon, 2025).



**Figure 1.** The academic and administrative structure of the MIGAL research institute.

**Figure 1** illustrates the institutional structure of MIGAL and the relationships between the academic system of the institute and the regional development organizations operating in the Galilee. At the center of the system is the Academic Council of MIGAL, which functions as the main scientific authority responsible for academic policy, research evaluation, and institutional scientific direction. Within the academic framework, research groups and individual researchers operate under the supervision of the Academic Council. Several professional committees function within this framework, including committees responsible for research evaluation, ethical supervision, and scholarship programs. The administrative structure includes the Galilee Development Company, the Public Administration of MIGAL which is the institute's board of directors, and the Operating Administration responsible for the institute's daily management. This structure ensures administrative accountability while maintaining the scientific independence

of the academic system (Levanon & Degani, 2025).

### **3.2. The Researchers' Forum**

The Researchers' Forum represents an interdisciplinary academic platform that includes all scientists working at the MIGAL Research Institute. The forum is convened by the Scientific Director and meets approximately three times per year. During these meetings researchers present reports describing the progress of their scientific activities, methodological developments, and research plans for the future. The forum promotes interdisciplinary communication and enables researchers from different disciplines to identify opportunities for collaboration. The forum also addresses broader institutional issues such as the development of research infrastructure, recruitment of scientists, and strategic planning for future research activities. Such interactions reflect the principles of knowledge exchange and interactive learning emphasized in regional innovation theory (Lundvall, 1992; Cooke, 2001; Gibbons et al., 1994; Clark, 1998).

### **3.3. The Supreme Academic Council**

The Supreme Academic Council represents the highest academic authority within MIGAL. The council is composed of professors from universities and recognized academic institutions and senior researchers with extensive scientific experience. The council is responsible for approving research programs, supervising academic standards, and determining criteria for the evaluation and promotion of researchers. Through these responsibilities the council ensures that the scientific activities of MIGAL meet internationally recognized academic standards. A recent comparison has shown that the academic achievements of MIGAL's scientists (publishing articles, receiving research grants, appearing at conferences, etc.) are comparable to those of faculty members at universities (Degani & Levanon, 2025).

The Scientific Director of the institute operates under the authority of the Supreme Academic Council. The appointment of the Scientific Director requires approval both from the Supreme Academic Council and from the Public Administration of MIGAL, thereby reflecting the integrated structure of the institute.

### **3.4. The Internal Academic Council**

The Internal Academic Council functions as the executive academic body responsible for the daily scientific governance of MIGAL. The council includes senior researchers who lead research groups that hold doctoral degrees and senior academic ranks. The council convenes approximately once per month. During these meetings members discuss research strategy, evaluate ongoing research programs, review academic recruitment proposals, and supervise institutional collaborations with external partners. Proposals approved by the Internal Academic Council are subsequently forwarded to the Supreme Academic Council for final academic approval and to the governing administrative bodies for institutional endorsement.

**Figure 2** illustrates the relationships between the Researchers' Forum, the In-

ternal Academic Council, Supreme Academic Council and the administration of MIGAL.



**Figure 2.** Relationships between the academic and administration bodies of the MIGAL research institute.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of the present study demonstrate that the institutional development of MIGAL represents a distinctive model in which academic research, applied technological innovation, and regional development are structurally interconnected (Levanon & Degani, 2025). The Researchers' Forum provides an interdisciplinary environment that encourages collaboration among scientists working in diverse research fields. Such collaborative environments have been identified as key components of successful regional innovation systems (Cooke, 2001; Gunasekara, 2006). The Internal Academic Council plays a central role in translating scientific ideas into institutional policies and research strategies. Its continuous supervision of research activities ensures that the institute maintains high scientific standards. The Supreme Academic Council provides an additional level of academic oversight

and guarantees that research evaluation and promotion processes conform to internationally accepted academic standards. As a result of this activity structure, it was found that the institute's scientists reached a scientific level like that of scientists at senior academic institutions (Degani & Levanon 2025). The structure which includes a connection to the Galilee Development Company, links applied research to the needs of regional development. In this way, the two goals of academic and economic development in Galilee are achieved (Levanon & Degani 2025).

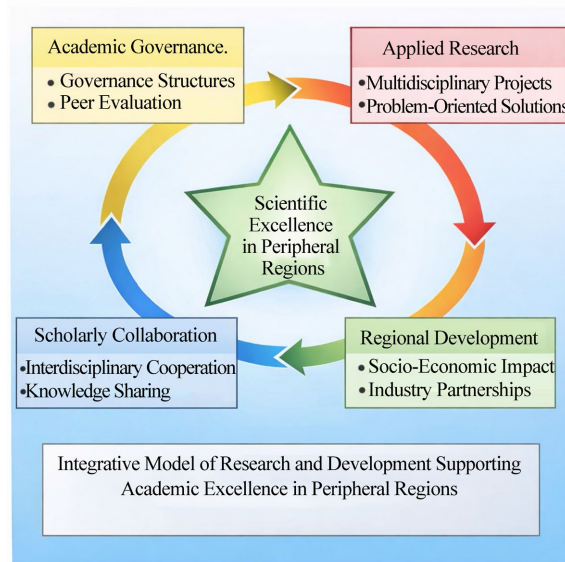


Figure 3. The integrative quality model developed at the MIGAL research institute.

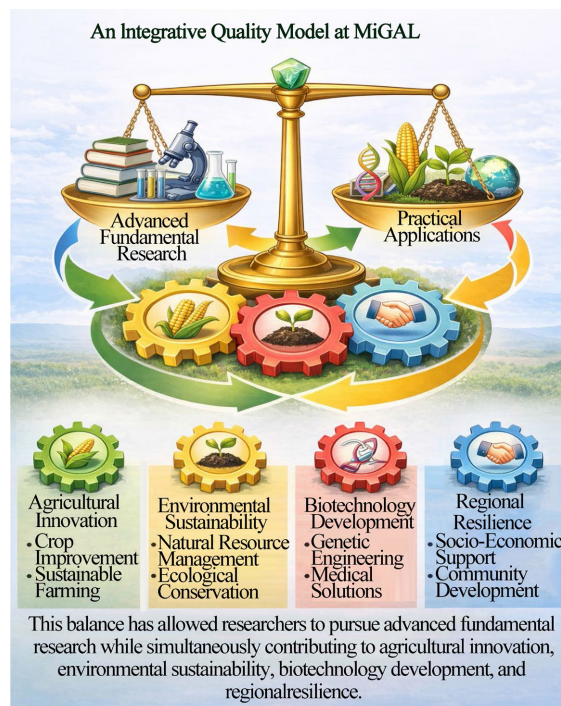


Figure 4. Schematic representation of the integrated components of MIGAL.

The model presented in **Figure 3** illustrates how academic governance structures interact with research groups and scientific infrastructure to support the achievement of high-quality scientific research (Degani & Levanon, 2025). The institutional structure of MIGAL also reflects the principles of the Triple Helix model, which emphasizes collaboration between universities, industry, and governmental institutions as a driving force for innovation (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000; Etzkowitz, 2008).

**Figure 4** illustrates the integration between the academic governance system and the administrative framework associated with regional development institutions. A structure that allowed for the combination of a high academic level with applied research for regional development.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that the MIGAL Research Institute has developed a distinctive institutional model that integrates academic governance with regional development structures. The collaboration among the Researchers' Forum, the Internal Academic Council, and the Supreme Academic Council ensured high scientific standards and effective coordination of research activities. The institutional framework developed at MIGAL has enabled the institute to achieve scientific productivity while contributing to agricultural innovation, biotechnology development, and environmental research in northern Israel. Based on these academic achievements, the MIGAL Research Institute was recognized by the Israel's Council for Higher Education as an essential component in the establishment of a university in the Galilee (Israel Council for higher education, 2022). Following this recommendation of the Council for Higher Education, the Israeli government decided to establish the University of the Galilee in Kiryat Shmona by a merger of Tel Hai College and the MIGAL Research Institute (Israel Government resolution, 2025). Previous recognition of MIGAL's applied research achievements has led to the decision of the Israeli government to support to MIGAL as an essential growth engine for the regional development of the Galilee (Israel Government resolution, 2017). The principles on which MIGAL's unique structure is based are independent academic management by scientists (Supreme and Internal academic councils and a Scientific director) within the framework of a company whose goal is the economic development of the peripheral region. The relationship of trust between the two components allows for the achievement of a high scientific level in conjunction with the production of knowledge essential for the development of the region. Therefore, this model may serve as an example for the establishment of research institutions in other peripheral regions seeking to combine scientific excellence with regional development.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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