

Ford have opened a research centre in Israel, intended to help the automaker tap into the region's burgeoning mobility startup community. Israel in recent years has grown to rival Silicon Valley in terms of tech entrepreneurship, with success stories such as Jerusalem-based Mobileye, who were bought by Intel in 2017 for USD \$15bn. Investors have poured roughly \$6bn into Israeli smart mobility startups since 2013, according to EcoMotion, a nonprofit organization that hosts a yearly mobility conference in Tel Aviv.



"We recognise the importance of being in one of the world's leading innovation communities and ecosystems," Ford Executive Chairman William Ford (photo) said in a statement. "This new centre is not only an expansion of our existing research and innovation centres, but provides an opportunity to join a growing innovation community in Israel."

Ford gave a keynote speech last week at the EcoMotion conference and attended the opening of the centre. "This really becomes the lifeblood of what Ford Motor Company will be in the future", Ford said at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. He said the site will start small, with about 10 to 12 workers, but likely will grow quickly, similar to Ford's research centre in Palo Alto, California, which opened in 2015 with a small staff that has grown to about 250 today.

Ford said the site's researchers will work with those in Palo Alto and in Dearborn, Michigan, to explore future technologies, and would work closely with SAIPS, an Israeli computer vision company Ford acquired in 2016. He said the two companies will focus on research on interior monitoring, sensors, OTA updates, cybersecurity, and autonomous technology.