

# Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation: Challenges Posed by High Technologies



Dr. Sigitas Renčys, Director of Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation:  
"The Foundation is always open to new ideas."

This year, *Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation* marks its 15th anniversary. The Foundation was established in 1993 by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Since November 2004, *Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation* is a member organization of the European Science Foundation.

**The mission of the foundation** is to implement the state policy in the field of science and studies through the administration of monetary resources allocated to the Foundation while ensuring their efficient use, to promote the development and progress of science and studies in the country, to speed up the adoption of high technologies, to improve the competitiveness of science, and to administer the state loans to students of higher education institutions.

For the purpose of implementation of its strategic objectives, the main operating task of the Foundation is to support science and studies through competition.

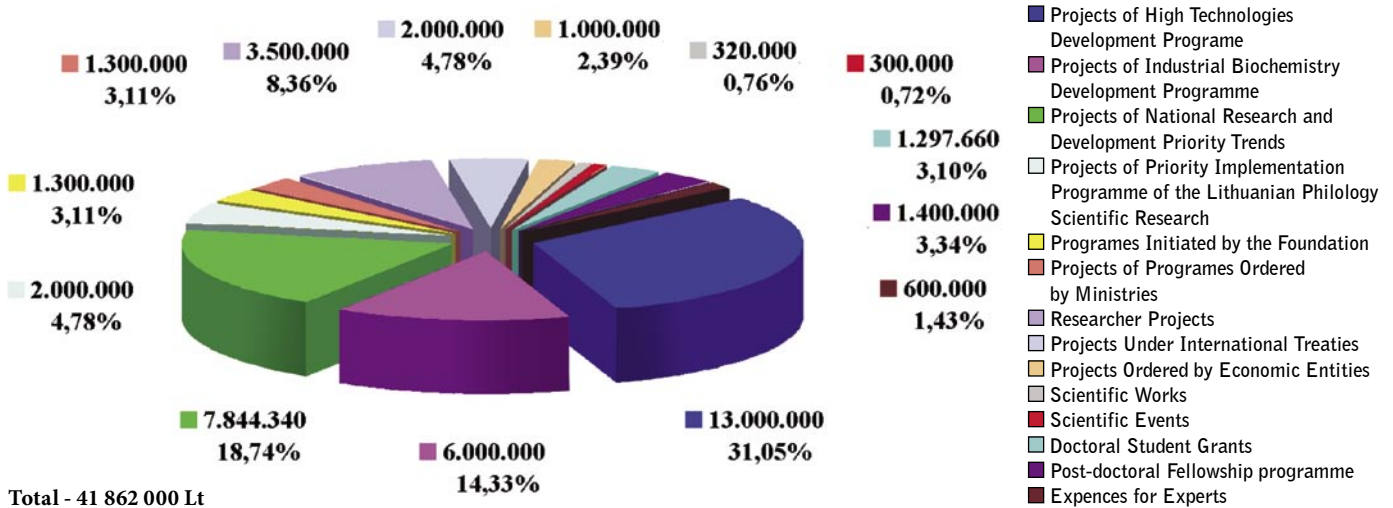
The areas of activity supported by the Foundation:

- scientific research and experimental development projects in line with priorities of Lithuanian scientific research and experimental development as approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the projects under the programmes approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania;
- implementation of scientific research and experimental development programmes relevant to the state and initiated by the Foundation;
- scientific research projects proposed by scientist groups or individual scientists;
- scientific research and experimental development projects implemented by science and studies institutions under international agreements;
- scientific research projects commissioned by business entities and conducted by science and studies institutions;
- preparation of textbooks for higher education institutions, scientific monographic studies and other scientific work;
- arrangement of scientific conferences, symposiums and other science events;
- grants for PhD students actively engaged in scientific research;
- post-doctoral fellowship programme;
- state loans to students of higher education institutions.

During the 15 years of its operation, the budget of the *Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation* has grown dynamically: from LTL 2.2 million in 1994 to LTL 65.4 million in 2008. The international cooperation has grown every year. The Foundation has signed cooperation agreements on experts' exchange with analogous foreign organizations. Famous scientists of Lithuanian origin from the USA, Canada, Germany and other countries participate in the activities of the Foundation.

The major significance in recent years has been gained by High Technology Development Programme 2007–2013 approved by the Government. Approved

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funding under this programme for the period of seven years totals LTL 125 million. This year alone LTL 13 million were distributed to the projects under this programme.

This means that, by supporting science and scientific research, the state aims to develop high technology industries already existing in Lithuania such as biotechnology, mechatronics, laser technologies, information technologies, nanotechnologies and electronics. Strategic objectives of the Lisbon process enable the faster growth of added value in production and services in Lithuania. These objectives are also served by another programme approved by the Government and administered by the Foundation, Industrial Biotechnology Development Programme in Lithuania 2007 – 2010.

According to Dr. Sigitas Renčys, Director of *Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation*, the number of applications submitted for these programmes is growing each year; however, selection of the projects financed by the state is based not only on the relevance and diversity, but also on their sustainability as indicated by certain qualitative criteria. Most importantly, the projects should stimulate the high technology industries.

Biotechnology still remains one of the most promising technological development areas in Lithuania as well as the largest investment sector in the world. Such companies as *Fermentas* and *Sicor Biotech* successfully operate in this market. Also worth mentioning is another interesting biotechnology project carried out by a team led by professor Artūras Žukauskas, “Solid-State Lighting Technology For Phytotrons and Greenhouses”. The objective of this research is to develop, by

combining semiconductor-based illuminators with conventional lighting devices, economically viable solid-state lighting technologies for phytotrons and greenhouses that would enable the growing of plants with higher productivity, higher nutritional and taste qualities, better visual appearance of the product and higher concentration of biologically active substances.

Fascinating scientific studies in mechatronics are conducted by a group of scientists led by professor Vytautas Ostaševičius. Outstanding results in the area of nanotechnologies and electronics were reported by a team of scientists led by professor Saulius Juršėnas working with organic electronics materials and devices as well as power-saving technologies.

The achievements of Lithuanian laser scientists are also significant. More than 10 high-tech companies involved in design and production of laser technology products operate in Lithuania. These companies export over 75 per cent of their production volume to the most developed countries of the world. This year, *Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation* is financing ten high technology development projects in this field.

Implementation of all the above mentioned programmes stimulates the relationship between science and business, and provides necessary funding for new scientific and laboratory equipment. It plays an important role in the fundamental renovation of Lithuanian scientific base.

A number of the studies financed by the Foundation as well as the scientists who conducted them were honoured with national prizes and other awards. The Foundation is always open to new ideas and notable scientific objectives and undertakings.



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