

LITHUANIA

This information on national public-health research structures has been gained from country key informants and internet searches for STEPS (Strengthening Engagement in Public Health Research www.steps-ph.eu), a project funded by the European Commission Seventh Framework Research Programme. It builds on the country profiles and reports from Ministries of Health and Ministries of Science that were created previously for SPHERE (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-health/sphere/sphereprofiles.htm>).

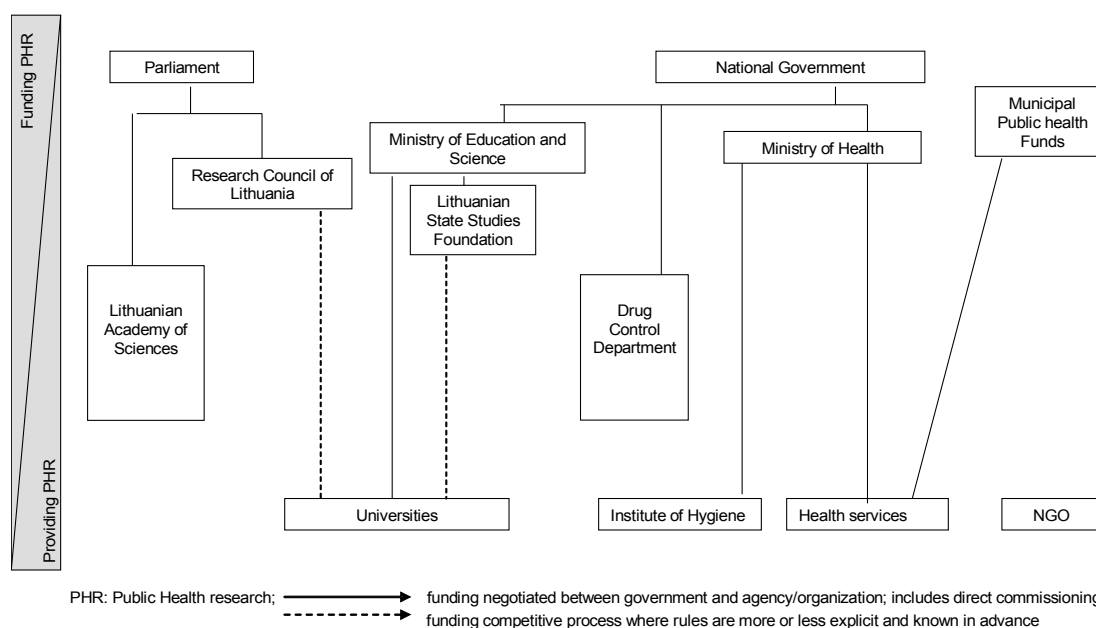


The organogram shows the structure for managing and providing public-health research from the perspective of financial flows.

The main organisations are also briefly described, with their URLs, and other relevant national documents and information on public-health research.

Note: 'Public-health research' includes all health research at population, organisation and system level broadly relevant to health and health-care policy and practice. It excludes clinical and laboratory (biomedical) research.

1. Organogram



2. Research Commissioners

In 2005, (all-subjects) research in Lithuania was funded approximately 55% in the higher education sector, 25% in government institutes and 20% in the private sector.

(http://cordis.europa.eu/erawatch/docs/image/LT_Funding_Flowchart.jpg)

The new Government Programme (December 2008) focused on the restrictions of government spending but announced R&D and innovation to be at the core of the economic development. Tax reform in favour of R&D and Innovation is foreseen, as well as the improvement of higher education and R&D sector performance by giving more freedom for universities and implementation of competitive funding mechanisms.

Actual R&D policy planning today is closely related to the EU structural funds, including business and industrial R&D. Nevertheless, there remains 'lack of linkages and interaction among the various actor groups, especially between R&D and the higher education sector as well as between business and innovation intermediaries.' The number of doctoral students in Lithuania in proportion to the total number of graduates is one of the lowest in EU.

PHR is commissioned from 3 basic sources: state budget (for academic and research institutions, for national subsidized and competitive research programmes); private funds; international funds. The main research commissioner in the country is gradually becoming the Research Council of Lithuania (www.lmt.lt).

2.1 Ministry of Health, <http://sena.sam.lt/lt/main>

Under the heading 'Health Sciences', the ministry informs about the European 7th Framework Research Programme. "Although our country's scientists in this program take their first steps, it is clear that the investigations will engage more and more of our universities, institutes, centers and laboratories". It indicates "areas that may be of interest to medical researchers of our country can be": Research Articles; Vilnius University; Kaunas University of Medicine; Electronic Information Lithuanian Medical Library

2.2. Ministry of Science

Ministry of Education and Science (Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo ir mokslo ministerija, <http://www.smm.lt/en/>)

The Ministry of Education and Science is in charge of preparing and executing R&D policy since 1992. The ministry strategic action plan for 2010 - 2012 is at <http://www.smm.lt/eng.html>.

The Agency for International Science and Technology Development Programmes in Lithuania (Tarptautiniu mokslo ir technologiju pletros programu agentura, <http://www.tpa.lt/eng/index.htm>). The Agency is a state budgetary institution, acting for the Ministry of Science and Education and Ministry of Economy. It provides information and training about international R&D programmes, co-funding for European Research Framework programmes and funding for EUREKA and EUROSTARS projects.

2.2.1. Lithuanian State Studies Foundation (<http://www.vsf.lt/en>)

Previously called The State Science and Studies Foundation (Lietuvos valstybinis mokslo ir studiju fondas, VMSF) from 1993 to become a major institution administering public funds for science (€12m in 2006), from the January 2010 the Foundation operates under new name and regulations, to administer State loans and State-supported loans to students at all levels.

2.3. Other ministries or parliament

2.3.1. The Research Council of Lithuania

The Research Council of Lithuania started work in May 2008. It contributes to the science policy formation and is involved in legislative issues of the Lithuanian science and studies system. It is the main agency for funding competitive individual grants and research programmes.

The Council has a Board and two committees, each of 11 members: the Committee of Humanities and Social Sciences has one representative from Faculty of Social Sciences, Policy and Public Administration Institute, Kaunas University of Technology; the Committee of Natural and Technical Sciences has two representatives of Natural Sciences and two from Faculties of Medicine.

2.4. Regions

Regional funding of PHR is implemented through municipal Public Health Funds on competitive basis though it covers the absolutely minor share of the total PHR funding. Action oriented research is prioritized.

2.5. Foundations

3. Research Performers

3.1. State Institutes

3.1.1 The Institute of Hygiene (www.hi.lt/) in Vilnius is subordinate to the Ministry of Health. Its mission is to serve as an institution of the science, teaching and practical help for public health in the field of prophylactic medicine. It accumulates and coordinates scientific research that is necessary as an evidence base for decisions in occupational and public health. There are several departments, mainly related to infectious diseases and environmental control, and one Department of Public Health Research

3.2. Mixed organizations

3.2.1. Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (Lietuvos Mokslų Akademija, <http://lma.lt/index.php?lang=en>)

The Academy of Sciences was established in 1941, with a new statute in 2003. It has 5 Divisions of Sciences: Humanities and Social Sciences; Mathematical Physical and Chemical Sciences; Biological, Medical and Geosciences; Agricultural and Forestry Sciences; and Technical Sciences. It publishes the journal "Science and Technology", and has four 'Associated Institutes', of which one is the Institute of Immunology of Vilnius University.

3.2.2. Drug Control Department (www.nkd.lt) under the Government of Lithuania is one of the key initiators and contractors of PHR in the field of drugs control and prevention (purchasing). It is a coordinating governmental institution in the field of drug control and drug use prevention. Conducts public health research in the field. Funded by the state budget.

3.3. Universities

There are 15 state and six private universities, with 18 university institutes (founded in 2001 to secure the science base of universities), 17 state research institutes, and eight state research establishments. For education only, there are an additional 28 non-university colleges that take care of about 30% of all students. The list of all universities is available at <http://www.smm.lt/smt/tvam/index.htm>.

In terms of numbers of students, the largest universities are Vilnius University (<http://www.vu.lt/lt/>, 22,500 students), Kaunas University of Technology (<http://www.ktu.lt/lt/>, 17,500), and Mykolas Romeris University (<http://www.ltu.lt/>, 16,000). All main universities participate in the development of the S&T support infrastructure, both science and technology parks and science, study, and business centres.

There are 3 major Public Health Schools:

- Kaunas: Faculty of Public Health (FPH), Kaunas University of Medicine. Consists of four departments: Department of Preventive Medicine; Department of Social Medicine; Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences; Department of Environmental and Occupational Health. Bachelor studies (n=40); Master studies (n=88); PhD studies (n=3-4)
- Vilnius: Institute of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Vilnius University. Bachelor studies (n= 40 approx.); Master studies (n=10-30 approx.); PhD studies (n=3-4 approx.)
- Klaipeda: Department of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Klaipeda University. Bachelor studies (n=22+15 approx.)

3.4. Health Services

3.5. Independent organizations

NGOs: A few NGOs active in the public health field have conducted research studies in specific public health areas funded mostly by international donors. Their research activities are rare and sporadic and dependent on funding availability and limited organizational capacity.

4. Research Strategies

4.1. In 2008, the Lithuanian Government approved two programmes to foster economic development based on knowledge production and innovation: the National Lisbon Strategy Implementation Programme (2008-2010) and the new Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

Also, General R&D development targets are set in Lithuanian long-term science, research, and development strategy (until 2015) and the Lithuanian high technology development programme (2007-2013). (Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/erawatch/>)

5. Programmes and calls

5.1. Research Council of Lithuania

The call for individual research 2-4 year projects in 2010 was valued at 40m LT (around €11m) <http://www.lmt.lt/EN/DOCUMENTS/index.php>

6. European contacts

6.1. National FP7 Contact point (Health area)

6.1.1. Jurgita Stonyte, Agency for Research, Innovation and Technology, www.tpa.lt

6.2. National DG SANCO Contact point

6.2.1. Zita Ceponyte, the President of the Lithuanian Consumer Institute; www.vartotojai.lt

6.2.2. National Focal Point for the EU Health Programme 2008-2013

Audrius Sceponavicius, Head of Public Health Department at the Ministry of Health of Lithuania, www.sam.lt, Audrius.sceponavicius@sam.lt