

Title: Researchers' Excellence Network - RENET

Coordinating institution: Šiauliai University, Višinskio St. 25, Šiauliai, Lithuania

Website: <http://renet.dist.su.lt/>

Participating institutions: Siauliai university, Lithuania

Legal (institutional) membership: Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers (LSYR) (Lithuania). Faculty of Organizational Studies in Novo Mesto (Slovenia); University of Split (Croatia); International Business School (Bulgaria); Matej Bel University (Slovakia); National-Louis University (Poland); Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno (Belarus); Faculty of Financial Management and Business, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Ukraine); Department of State and Local Finance, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Ukraine).

Personal membership: researchers from universities of the United States; New Zealand; Indonesia; Taiwan; Republic of Korea; India; Netherlands; Austria; Italy; Spain; Czech Republic; Slovakia; Poland; Latvia; Turkey; Ukraine; Belarus; Romania; Republic of Macedonia; Serbia, Lithuania and other countries.

Type of research infrastructure: networked, virtual

National and international cooperation. In Lithuania, the network unites 6 higher education institutions of science and studies and Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers. Cooperation takes place with representatives of 24 foreign countries from 47 universities, research institutes, institutions related to scientific practice and NISPAcee (The Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe).

Description of R&D Infrastructure

The International Researchers' Excellence Network RENET is an interdisciplinary network of national and international level researchers. RENET was established in January, 2015. It was initiated and coordinated by Šiauliai University (Lithuania). In 2015, when the network started operating, it united 10 higher education institutions (universities) and about 30 solitary scientists who in total represented 11 countries in the world and 14 different institutions. Both natural and legal persons can be the members of the network. The geographic and institutional distribution of network members is constantly expanding, the activities of the network are presented in various events abroad.

The aim of RENET is to consolidate the forces of researchers of institutions and partner institutions, which would help to develop researchers' scientific competencies and contribute ensuring researchers' interdisciplinary / inter-institutional cooperation at the local, national and international level.

The joint activities of the network perform two main functions: 1) joint thematic network discussions (methodological seminars, lectures, conferences, forums, etc.) in a traditional or distance way. All events of the network are recorded and published on a network website; 2) researchers' mobility and exchanges of competencies.

Šiauliai University (RENET creator and coordinator) carries out doctoral studies in four fields: education studies, philology, economics and management. Scientific research is carried out in six areas of sciences (social, humanitarian, biomedical, physical, technological sciences, and arts). The University is open to cooperation in all of the said areas. RENET is needed to increase the internationalization of scientific research (and doctoral studies), for the development of researchers' cooperation in a research area, planning and implementing national and international scientific research and projects; for the development of competencies necessary for conducting the highest level scientific research; for the development of new methodologies for social and other sciences; for dissemination and publicity of Lithuanian scientific research and its results in the world.

Organization of the Use of R&D Infrastructure

RENET uses the existing infrastructure of Šiauliai University: a 120-seat video conference room at the library of Šiauliai University with its audio and video equipment, Moodle system, Adobe Connect software and wireless Internet access. The information about RENET is disseminated and publicised on website of Šiauliai University (news column), by the GMAIL account and the RENET website created in Moodle environment <http://renet.dist.su.lt/>.

So far, the Network operates on the basis of volunteering: 2-3 persons carry out all organizational-technical work. The chairperson of the coordinating committee is the event organizer, webmaster and e-mail administrator, information disseminator, moderator of events, responsible for activities, contact search and network development. IT specialists are responsible for technical solutions of events. RENET in the first place uses the human potential of its members (knowledge, expertise, entrepreneurship), IT infrastructure of ŠU (sometimes in real time members participate in the events organised in a distance mode: read papers, provide feedback to speakers), sources of disseminating research output (publishing possibilities), possibilities of developing scientific competencies (trainings, international events).

RENET organizes international scientific events (lectures, discussions, conferences, seminars, methodological seminars) on topics relevant to researchers (at least 8 events per year). The participants of the network – researchers – are invited to take part in discussions, seminars, conferences and / or they can become webinar organizers themselves. International and national scientific events are organized in the traditional and virtual way, using modern technologies (video conferences, distance learning courses, etc.). The RENET takes care to disseminate information: members receive information from other members about the possibilities of publishing, announced invitations to obtain funding for international research, organised conferences, international weeks, trainings, internship possibilities, invitations to become members of editorial boards of journals, to teach abroad, to review research works, dissertations, to participate in defences of dissertations.

Open access services are provided. On its website, the RENET publicises video records of scientific events, members' information on conferences, possibilities for publishing in scientific journals.

The activities of RENET correspond to the priority of the strategy 'Smart Specialization 2020' '*Inclusive and Creative Society*'. The activities are carried out in two areas: 'Modern Self-Educational Technologies and Processes, Promoting the Becoming of a Creative and Productive Personality' and 'Technologies and Processes for the Development and Implementation of Breakthrough Innovations'.

Planned Directions of R&D Development

It is planned to continue looking for partners (universities, research institutes, networks), which would be interested in the development of researchers' competencies. It is planned to apply for enhancement of network activities (for ordering lectures / seminars of invited teachers on topics relevant for the researchers). The network is being publicised in various international events; therefore, it is planned to expand the number of its members (legal and natural persons). It is planned to create a Facebook account. New opportunities will be sought to finance network activities (membership is free). Maintenance of the network and development of activities require employment of human resources (an IT specialist, event organizer and webmaster).

Participation in the Activities of National and International Infrastructures

The materials of the scientific events of RENET, knowledge sources depend on the access of the very researchers, participating in the events; thus, the resources available at ŠU and other institutions of international members are used. In May, 2018, RENET unites representatives from 47 institutions (universities, research institutes, institutions related to scientific practice) from 24 countries (the United States, New Zealand, Indonesia, India, Taiwan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Turkey, Poland, Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania). RENET plans to look for possibilities to cooperate with other networks of national and foreign researchers,

focusing on the key aim: non-commercial dissemination of scientific research and the development of scientific excellence.