

Sunrise Valley - bringing business and science together

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Introduction

Lithuania has important elements of an innovation system, including universities, state research institutions, a business community, and a set of institutions aiming to support technology applications. But it has not yet managed to bring together these elements in a systematic way, in a coherent and coordinated framework able to link the research and development (R&D) community with the enterprise community.

As EU membership approaches, Lithuanian businesses face major challenges in adapting to EU regulations and standards. This adaptation will require significant investments in retooling and in process and management change to meet environmental, health, safety, and other standards. But adaptation also provides an opportunity to introduce innovative and more competitive technologies, processes, and management practices.

Today the R&D community operates largely in isolation from the private sector. Its output—in terms of publications, citations, patents, and licenses—is modest. There is an overemphasis on government-funded R&D, carried out and supported by a vast array of public institutions. In addition, funding instruments are outdated, focusing largely on institutional funding rather than more modern program funding.

Background

The **Sunrise Valley project** addresses national economic and scientific growth needs and cross-sector (private/public) cooperation challenges. It takes advantage of currently existing resources and builds upon expansion potential vital to clusters, i.e.: academic presence and access to knowledge; currently functioning there laser technology companies and other businesses' interests and extension plans; both municipal and governmental endorsement; available general infrastructure in the Sunrise avenue area in Vilnius. **Sunrise Valley** area already is fully integrated into the city life and represents dynamic, multifunctional environment to be further cultivated.

To create a knowledge economy cluster **Sunrise Valley** is a joint effort of academe and business supported by public service organizations (Vilnius Municipality, Knowledge Economy Forum). Given the specialization of research institutions concentrated in the area and the competitive advantages of Vilnius, specific high-tech businesses - laser and ICT - will be further developed. Complementing these companies, as a breakthrough element of hi-tech cluster – business and science center - will be established, including a unit for technology demonstration, intellectual property development center, high-tech laboratories for industry and science, business incubator, facilities for start-ups.

It is foreseen that **Sunrise Valley** will act as an indispensable link between currently active science and technology parks and business incubating system in Vilnius. In **Sunrise Valley** area – Vilnius

University and Vilnius Gediminas Technical University - educate the main stream of student body in the city, and it will be more so with the coming plans to move several of their educational units to the district. This physical adjacency of educational and research facilities to the establishing of cluster constitutes a vast advantage and development capacity compared to other similar projects in Lithuania. Sunrise Valley has a full potential to become the main base of business start-ups, which can further expand and continue activities in cooperation with other science and technology parks (STP).

Project Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of creating Sunrise Valley cluster is to contribute to the growth of knowledge economy and increased competitiveness of Lithuania worldwide. It will be done by creating favourable business conditions, promoting cooperation between business and education / research, investment in R&D, ensuring technology transfer & IPR, launching business support services.

Expected results and value of establishing cluster

Establishing of Sunrise Valley cluster in the area will give the following results:

- provide modern conditions for quality education and research linked to professional activity and business environment;
- generate employment opportunities for highly qualified university graduates, scientists and other specialists;
- provide favourable conditions for commercialization of research;
- act as an indispensable link between currently active science and technology parks and business incubating system in Vilnius;
- provide basis for local and foreign investment for the research projects.

It is seen that such a unique cluster project as Sunrise Valley will bring the following value:

- foster competitiveness of Lithuanian research and knowledge based business on the international arena;
- contribute to the up-to-date innovation system development;
- improve the quality of higher education and research;
- contribute to retaining of highly skilled labour force and be an anti-brain-drain measure;
- become as a magnet and scientific repatriation center;
- encourage cooperation between business and academic community;
- further develop international cooperation and networking on equal terms;
- promote the image of Vilnius city as the city of business, science and studies.

Abstract:

The Sunrise Valley cluster project addresses to national economic and scientific growth needs and cross-sector (private/public) cooperation challenges. It takes advantage of currently existing resources and builds upon expansion potential vital to clusters, i.e.: academic presence and access to knowledge; currently functioning there laser technology companies and other businesses' interests and extension plans; both municipal and governmental endorsement; available general infrastructure. In Sunrise Valley area biggest Vilnius universities educate the main stream of student body in the city. Sunrise Valley area already is fully integrated into the city life and has a full potential to become the main base of business start-ups, which can further expand and continue activities in cooperation with other science and technology parks.