



## **Open Access Centre at the Nature Research Centre: a facility for enhancement of scientific research, education and public outreach in Lithuania**

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Open Access Centre (OAC) was established in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2013 as a subdivision of the Nature Research Centre (NRC) operating on the principle of open access for both internal and external users. The OAC consists of 15 units, i.e. 15 NRC laboratories or their branches. Forty four sets of research equipment were purchased. The OAC cooperates with Lithuanian science and studies institutions, business sector and other governmental and public institutions. Investigations can be carried in the Geosciences, Biotaxonomy, Ecology and Molecular Research, and Ecotoxicology fields. Environmental radioactivity, radioecology, nuclear geophysics, microscopic and chemical composition of natural compounds (minerals, rocks etc.), paleomagnetic, magnetic and environmental investigations, as well as ground and water contamination by oil products and other organic environment polluting compounds, identification of fossils, rocks and minerals can be studied in the Georesearch field. Ecosystems and identification of plants, animals and microorganisms are main subjects of the Biotaxonomy, Ecology and Molecular Research field.

The Ecotoxicological Research deals with toxic and genotoxic effects of toxic substances and other sources of pollution on macro- and microorganisms and cell cultures.

Open access is guaranteed by: (1) providing scientific research and experimental development services; (2) implementing joint business and science projects; (3) using facilities for the training of specialists of the highest qualifications; (4) providing properly qualified and technically trained users with opportunities to carry out their scientific research and/or experiments in the OAC laboratories by themselves. Services provided in the Open Access Centre can be received by both internal and external users: persons undertaking innovative economic activities, students of other educational institutions, interns, external teams of researchers engaged in scientific research activities, teachers etc. Applications for a grant of open access shall be received online in accordance with the established procedure via the NRC website ([www.gamtostyrimai.lt](http://www.gamtostyrimai.lt)).

State-of-the-art equipment enables researchers to carry out up-to-date scientific research and educational projects, scientific experiments, graduation and laboratory works. Scientists, researchers and students get the opportunity to deepen their knowledge, conduct new research in the field of natural sciences, to obtain new data to be used for further studies as well as for the development of products of higher added value. Favourable conditions are created for pursuing and developing higher level scientific research, for the implementation of joint and interdisciplinary projects, for enhancing cooperation between business and public institutions as well as between those of studies and science. The implementation of the above mentioned tasks leads to the enhanced competitiveness of Lithuanian scientists and researchers and to dissemination of the high quality scientific knowledge for a society. Tens of students from different universities and researchers from other institutions are using the OAC facilities. „Pan-European coordination action on CO<sub>2</sub> Geological Storage (CGS Europe)“; „GEO-SEAS“; „EMODNET“; „Securing the Conservation of biodiversity across Administrative Levels and spatial, temporal, and Ecological Scales (SCALES)“; „Decline Of Fraxinus excelsior in northern Europe“ and other projects are being carried out at the OAC so far.

This is a contribution to the Open Access Centre activities