

The Slovenian Science Foundation is a not-for-profit national institution intended to accelerate and promote science and research.

# The Slovenian Science Foundation in 2007

*Dr Edvard Kobal*

The most important Slovenian organisations from the fields of science and higher education, industry, trade, banking, media and the civil sector, as well as the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, were founder members of the foundation in 1994. Their founders' roles ensured the institution's successful start, which has been the basis for its ongoing respect and presence within Slovenian society. The foundation's membership in the European Science Foundation, the European Foundation Centre and in the European Science Events Association proves its pro-European orientation; co-operation with the World Federation of Scientists, as well as with specialised organisations of the United Nations (UNESCO, UNDP), further proves its participation in global affairs.

encourages organisation of financial to assure financial support, encourages public-private partnerships in science, and rewards researchers who are the authors of promising ideas and proposals for problem-solving. The foundation strives to respond differently from the public organisations in Slovenia that offer institutional support to Slovene researchers. The foundation

From 1994, new donors to the foundation have included those organisations which realise their responsibility towards the development of the environment in which they operate and on which their business success co-dependents. Since 2007, such organisations have been able to acquire the title "Institutional Friend of the Slovenian Science Foundation" on the basis of their annual financial support.

Since 1998, individuals who help the foundation to realise its annual (and longer) programmes through their donations in the form of financial contributions or works of art, as well as through their volunteer work, have also been joining the circle of friends of the foundation.

In the forefront of the efforts of the Slovenian Science Foundation are its efficient responses to the varying needs of all active generations of Slovene researchers, as well as young people in education who are interested in occupational research activity. The foundation is aware of the power of the ideas, knowledge and experiences of Slovene researchers, and also of their ability to change the world and to co-shape history. Therefore, it

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offers independent financial support to researchers and to young people in education for their personal growth into competent researchers, as well as for their development within the international scientific community. The purpose of independent support to Slovene researchers is Europeanisation of an image of the researcher, broadening their knowledge and abilities. The foundation strives for a more durable connection of researchers from academic environments (universities, research institutes) with their more frequent clients i.e. economic and other kinds of organisations. The foundation also aims to connect researchers at home with their compatriots operating abroad and with researchers from other countries.

The Slovenian Science Foundation aims to meet the needs of development in all fields of science, including new areas: we cannot turn back time and limit the growth of knowledge. Further, the foundation is aware of the necessity of broadening its portfolio because of the needs of the researchers regarding content, as well as the financial resources that can favourably influence the scope of new scientific findings. The foundation aims to reward the developers of interesting ideas – the researchers. To ensure this, it connects economic organisations, and specialised international and supranational organisations alongside citizens, into financial schemes within the framework of funds which assure independent financial support for Slovenian researchers.

The foundation has been developing institutional support of a financial nature since its establishment in May 1994. The oldest types of support to Slovenian researchers and students are defined in the foundation charters; those developed later, however, are defined in medium-term strategic documents and rules. Until 1998, the majority of financial resources for investments in people were assured

by the state budget. Since 1998, however, they have largely been assured by the private sector and foreign, mostly international, organisations. Due to this change in the financial environment, the support of the Slovenian Science Foundation has become effectively independent and thereby a direct contribution “for more science in Slovenia”. Slovenian researchers have gained a “second chance to assure financial support for their personal growth by means of advanced scientific study abroad or active co-operation at scientific meetings or within the framework of the projects of the European Science Foundation”. Without the financial schemes of the foundation, the market for financial support for researchers and young people in education would have become even poorer.

The Slovenian Science Foundation is a grant-giving and programme-running organisation. Along with financial support, it also plans and delivers a programme of promotion and popularisation of science and, in this manner, raises awareness among citizens of the Republic of Slovenia of the developmental role of science and research in modern Slovenian and European society.

The foundation promotes science and its creators – researchers of all active

generations – by organising one-day or several-day events, such as the traditional annual Slovenian Science Festival, Noordung Forum, and Thanksgiving Day, for donors, sponsors and friends of science. The foundation also co-operates in European events, such as the European Science Festival, the Night of European Researchers, etc. The foundation educates Slovene researchers and teachers in communicating science, and in planning and managing research projects. It provides the Slovenian market with original scientific and popular science publications as well as guidance literature. At the same time, it assists Slovene researchers in editing such works for various publishers.

In 2007, the foundation ended its first five years of co-operation with the World Federation of Scientists; it also organised the 6th Noordung Forum and the 13th Slovenian Science Festival, with international participation and the motto “Joy with Science for All Generations”. At the annual festival of science, the foundation celebrated 300 years from the birth of the natural scientist and doctor Carl von Linné, 150 years from the death of the “universal innovator” Josef Ressel, 130 years from the birth of the Slavist Rajko Nahtigal, and 115 years from the birth of the visionary on space travel and living in space, Herman Potočnik Noordung.

**Joy with science 2008**

