

## **STATE GENERAL LABORATORY**

### **1. Introduction**

The State General Laboratory (S.G.L.) has been developed as a dynamic control, monitoring, applied research and advisory services center for the public sector, recognized at local, national and European level.

It is the official Government Laboratory fulfilling the requirements embodied in the laws pertaining to the chemical, biological/microbiological and toxicological industry in Cyprus, operating as a national control center of foodstuff, pharmaceuticals, narcotics and police exhibits.

In cooperation with other competent bodies, the SGL is activated in the planning and integration of applied research in the area of the Environmental and Industrial repercussions in relation to Health and especially to Children's Health.

The S.G.L's objective is to support the development and integration of strategic planning and policy making in the areas of its responsibility and to contribute to the settlement of eventual issues.

### **2. Vision, Developmental Policy and Objectives**

**2.1 The vision of the S.G.L** is to establish itself as a center of control excellence, applied research and technical training (in the national, regional and European level) and to maximize the social-economical contributions on Environment and Public Health, Justice and Consumer Protection, through its construction for prevention of diseases and environmental pollution, as well to solve these problems.

#### **2.2 The Developmental Policy: Challenges and Restrictions**

The following objectives of S.G.L. can be highlighted:

- Continuously upgrading as a specialized center and service provider in the area of Foodstuff, Environment, Justice, Pharmaceuticals and other consumables;
- Upgrading its role at national and European level as a regional (Eastern Mediterranean) technical training center for the development of other laboratories, including private Cypriot laboratories;
- Developing the ability to utilize external funding and participate in European research networks aiming to solve problems.

The objects can be integrated through:

- Implementation of all the subjects that pertain to the interest of the S.G.L. by an approach that reflect the planning of program that follows
- Production development of different labs with the consequently introduction of automate and simplify the methodologies/ procedures) and the increment of effectiveness and representative of the controls.
- Maintaining and expanding the accreditation scope based on the ISO/IEC 1702: 2005 and transferring experience and knowledge to other Government

Departments as well as the private sector, on Quality Assurance and Metrology issues.

The evolution and development of the S.G.L. is interfered by three basic weaknesses which are related to its structural organization, the building facilities and the restrictions of the Public Service.

**2.3 Strategic Goals:** In order to implement its developmental policy, the SGL has set the following strategic goals:

Reorganization of the S.G.L.'s services In order to increase productivity and meet new requirements and needs, a new organizational approach is imperative in order for the SGL to be established as a Center of Excellence. To achieve this goal, the SGL must make a better utilization of its staff and modern equipment, and a successful distribution of its Community resources. In 2007, following an agreement with the Ministry of Health, the final proposal of reorganization was submitted.

- Autonomy: The autonomy of SGL as an institution governed by public law will lead to a greater flexibility and efficiency, mainly by the release from certain procedures and restrictions of the Public Service and the modernization of the resource management systems by using external founding opportunities.
- Relocation of SGL into new building

### **3. Organization - Structure – Financial Resources/Budget**

#### **3.1 Organization**

The SGL employs 135 permanent, temporary and contracted scientists and technicians. The permanent staff of the SGL is 83 persons. 98.5% of the staff has at least one university degree. Moreover, there are 14 employees working as interchangeable personnel (six of them belong to the permanent staff) and 21 hourly paid employees. To date, there are 170 employees.

#### **3.2 Structure**

The structure of the SGL consists of 21 laboratories divided into six sections, together with the support of IT and Quality Assurance unit.

#### **3.3 Financial Resources/ Budget**

In 2007, the SGL's budget was £4,424,425 compared to £4,372,574 in 2006 and £4,036,430 in 2005. Moreover, during 2007, the SGL's revenue from EU research programs was £42,865 and £401,513 from the Transition Facilities Project. A further £57,174 was granted from projects funded through the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation.

### **4. Competencies – Certain Departments**

The wide range of competences covers the following:

- Foodstuff and articles in contact with food
- Environmental pollution and water quality/safety
- Pharmaceuticals and cosmetics
- Forensic Chemistry and Forensic Toxicology

- Goods purchased by Government Stores and Industrial products
- Exported agricultural and industrial products through customs for tariff classification
- Children's toys

Within the framework of the above responsibilities, the S.G.L. co-operates with all Ministries, Municipalities, Governmental and other Organizations. It also provides services – in limited circumstances- to the private sector. Its staff serves on many boards (Food, Pharmaceuticals, Medicines and Poisonings, Cosmetics, Agricultural Medicines, Veterinary Drugs, Food Safety) and also in National Committees (e.g. National Nutritional Committee, National Committee Combating Cancer, National Centre of Information on Narcotics, National Committee on Environment and Children's Health).

## **5. Accreditation**

16 out of 21 laboratories of the S.G.L. are accredited. Details on the accreditation methods are covered by each laboratory as well as the scope can be found on the webpage of the S.G.L: [www.sgl.moh.gov.cy](http://www.sgl.moh.gov.cy).

## **6. Human Resource & Laboratory Equipment Development**

The S.G.L. uses advance technology equipment. In 2007, the amount of £225,000 was allocated from national resources for the purchase of specialized equipment. Another €277,000 came from EU resources, with an additional €90,000 conditional contribution from Cyprus. The S.G.L.'s staff is continuously trained in Cyprus and abroad in science related topics, laboratory management, technical issues and quality assurance. The "Learning Unit" co-ordinated all training programmes locally and internationality.

## **7. Research and International Co-operation**

The research is an important pillar of the scientific and technological development of the S.G.L. that carries out applied research in the areas of its activities in order to indicate and/or resolve issues related to health. Particular emphasis is placed on sectors such as Food Safety, Environment, connection between Environment and Health and determination of the Authenticity and the geographical origin of products.

The research in the area of food is carried out mainly with the financial support of the European Union, with additional funding from national resources such as the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation and the Ministry of Health. The S.G.L. incorporates, where possible, part of its work within EU research projects thus utilizing all possibilities offered for the development of the personnel and the exchange of information.

The S.G.L. has developed a network of partners and has signed partnership protocols Institutes, Universities and Organisations such as the EU Joint Research Centre, the Federal Agency of the Environment in Austria, the University of Cyprus and the University of Athens. Moreover, bilateral collaborations have been developed for the exchange of information, experiences and collaboration in research projects with important laboratories of Europe and other developed countries. In 2007, the S.G.L. continued its active participation and produced scientific presentations in EU activities on COST, WHO and other Networks and Conferences.

## **8. Updating and Drafting Laws and Regulations – Participation in EU Committees**

The S.G.L. has contributed substantially towards the updating of Laws related to its competences, as well to the preparation of new Regulations harmonized with the European Acquis.

Its staff participates in many expert committees, groups/bodies of the Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and also in meetings between Community and National Laboratories (CRL, NRL), for the elaboration and amendment of EU legislation related to the SGL's field of activities, as well as for the determination of strategy in all the fields of its competence.

## **9. Awareness**

The SGL during 2006 has launched intensive activities to enhance consumer awareness and provide information to the public at large. The bilingual website of the S.G.L., [www.sgl.moh.gov.cy](http://www.sgl.moh.gov.cy) is another source of valuable information about the activities of the laboratories, announcements of international organisations and other useful information.

## **10. Final conclusion**

2007 was a year of creativeness and productivity and landmarks the development of SGL. The S.G.L. corresponded to the control demand and to the challenge of equal and active participation to the European events and to contribute to the improvement of products, related to the quality of life and the environment and the safety of the public, heading steadily to its vision and goals. It has also made worthy funding opportunities from Europeans Union and Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation. During this time the safety of Public Interest, citizen's satisfaction and respect towards public health and the environment remained our constant guidelines. The driving force that maintains SGL's proven high standards are the high level scientific, technical, secretarial and accounting staff, as well as the staff of all our supporting services.

SGL gaze with optimism towards the future and is developing highly specialized, prospective and progressive service that meets European demands.