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MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-RECTOR



The University of Aveiro is a research-oriented university, strongly committed to developing cutting-edge research in strategic areas of knowledge, recognizing the implications of its operations and engaging on efforts for a sustainable development. In 2018, the whole community took part in several initiatives that will impact on the future of the university, as well as on the development and implementation of different measures imposed by changes in national research policies. The orientation to hire and retain highly qualified human resources and the high number of approved projects marked positively the year 2018.

The year was marked by the strong involvement with the Coordination of the Research Units and Associated Laboratories, in the process of preparing the proposals submitted under the evaluation process 2017/2018, promoted by the National Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). To this respect, new research units were approved by the UA General Council, namely a pole of the William James Center for Research, through the integration of some members currently in CINTESIS and CESAM, the Digimedia, composed of the members affiliated to the CIC-Digital, and the pole of REQUIMTE-LAQV, constituted by the majority of the members of the existing QOPNA.

Some major projects approved or started in 2018 illustrate the high-level research developed at our campi. The InPaCTus – Innovative Products and Technologies from Eucalyptus Project, demonstrates the strong link between UA and The Navigator Company, together with RAIZ and the University of Coimbra. Another important project was MEDISIS: Promoting the involvement of key actors in the Central Region for the transfer of knowledge and creation of new partnerships in the areas of Systems Medicine, Regenerative Medicine and Precision Medicine, whose main objectives are to promote the involvement of key actors of the region, identify R&D needs across multiple value chains and to transfer knowledge to these actors and to society in general. Also very important was the approval of MICROBONE – Novel 3D platforms to engineer bone microtissues for in vitro disease models, aiming at the validation and commercial exploitation of a platform based on hydrogels combining biomaterials of human origin and cells, such as disease models, in particular osteosarcoma. Coordinated by UA, the NanoTBTech- Nanoparticles-based 2D thermal bioimaging technologies aims at developing a 2D thermal bioimaging technology with submicroscopic resolution, based on nanothermometers and heater-thermometer nanostructures.

Following the outstanding number of UA applications to the 2017 FCT call for projects in all Scientific Domains, and involving funding from FCT, COMPETE 2020 and regional operational programmes, 141 projects were approved with UA as proponent and 68 as partner institution, representing success rates of 36% and 60%, respectively, and 42% overall. Adding to the human resources hired within these projects, and in order to comply with the implementation of article 23, of Decree-Law no. 57/2016, of August 31, the University published by August 31 three calls for a total of 203 positions, of which 25 to be financed by the University itself. Following the proposal to the FCT Institutional Call for Scientific Employment, the results were known in August 2018, with the allocation of funding for 20 positions distributed between teaching and research careers. Later on, the results of the FCT Individual Scientific Employment Call were also published, where UA obtained a result of 56 approved applications.

In addition to the orientation to hire and retain highly qualified human resources in-house, the University opened two positions for permanent researchers and established strong partnerships within the call for Collaborative Laboratories (CoLAB) with the main objective of creating, directly and indirectly, more qualified employment and scientific employment through the implementation of research and development agendas. 5 proposals were approved, adding to the participation in CoLAB ForestWISE (UA joined in early 2018).

UA has kept on its track and keeps working towards a more innovative and internationally recognized institution. Our robust, multi-disciplinary and collaborative research approach has driven innovation and delivers significant economic, social and environmental benefits for society, daring to embrace challenges as the need for novel environmentally friendly sources of energy while working more intensively to promote the protection of the physical and natural environment, developing new approaches to sustainable development. On the one hand, research should answer the most pressing needs of our local communities and environment, while the other hand, it should also change the wider world, by making a difference in varied fields such as health, information and communication technologies, energy, environment, materials, culture, literature, sustainability and so many other research fields impacting society in general and contributing to a stronger and united European Research Area. This year the research summit event will consider Energy and Sustainability as the main theme!