

2013 Evaluation of FCT Research and Development Units

Review process - Stage 2

Panel: 06

ESF internal Project Ref Number: 14-FCT-058

FCT Ref: 286

Title: Interuniversity Center for the History of Science and Technology (CIUHCT)

P.I.: Dr. Ana Isabel Da Silva Araújo Simões

Final Panel Consensus Report

Total weighted Score (A+B+C+D+E)	25 / 25	Final classification	Exceptional
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A. Productivity and contribution to the National Scientific and Technological System (NSTS): 5 /5

- i.) Research outputs; knowledge and technology transfer activities, when applicable, giving particular importance to the registration and value of patents, models or other relevant innovation indicators;
- ii.) Contribution to the accumulation of knowledge and skills of the National Science and Technology System (expected effects and results); contribution to the advanced training of researchers; contribution to the promotion and dissemination of scientific and technological research; dissemination of results and actions to promote scientific culture, as well as participation in activities designed to promote public understanding of science, technology, art and culture; relationship between available past funding and output;
- iii.) Degree of multidisciplinary and of internationalization, when relevant.

Substantiating comment:

The overall positive impression as stated in the panel's consensus report could be fully confirmed at the site visit. CIUHCT is an ambitious and very productive research centre, which is on the one hand internationally visible and on the other contributing substantially to the National Scientific and Technological System. The responsible scientists could convincingly demonstrate that they pursue a well thought out strategy of dissemination of their scientific output on a national and international level as well as in scientific and community networks. CIUHCT is not just multidisciplinary (in that it engages in research which has natural affinities with other disciplines and fields) but also internationally visible, with a gamut of activities, including publications (in well-read and appreciated refereed journals), organising of conferences, etc, with attendance from the international community. It is very successful in making itself known: dissemination is excellent through on-line journals, annual workshops, etc, as well as working with institutes that are devoted to the material side of research (museums, astronomical observatories, exhibitions). CIUHCT also seems to manage its input into the National Scientific and Technological System in an efficient way, not just through dissemination but also through training of PhDs. One of the strongest points of CIUHCT is that it has sought company within the most vigorous centres on STS and STMS in Europe and North America, thus obtaining a very good balance of local (and regional) and international presence and visibility.

B. Scientific and technological merit of the research team: 5 /5

- i.) Scientific productivity and merit of the results of the Unit's research, taking into account the relevance of both current and planned research, as well as the level of internationalization of scientific activities, including publications and citations of published works or other relevant aspects;
- ii.) Skills and composition of the research team to adequately execute the proposed program;
- iii.) Ability to successfully compete for national and international research grants and contracts, including contracts with companies.

Substantiating comment:

The scientific productivity of CIUHCT has improved on a high level over the last period. The diversity and quality of the publications is outstanding. CIUHCT has a strong scientific profile (Humanities bibliometric studies) and is among the top 3 in the Iberian Peninsula and the top 10 in Europe. The site visit exceeded all positive expectations. The teams have an adequate balance of junior and senior researchers, and national and international scholars. The hearings with the various groups of researchers showed that there is a great motivation to work together and to adhere to high scientific standards. With a profile like this the unit is well-positioned to compete for European-level as well as for international funding.

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C. Scientific merit and innovative nature of the strategic programme:

5 /5

i.) Relevance, originality and impact of the proposed strategic programme;

ii.) Contribution of the scientific, technological, artistic or cultural activities of the proposed programme for a smart specialization strategy of the region in which the RD Unit is incorporated;

iii.) Degree of multidisciplinary and of internationalization, when relevant.

** The score must be based on C.i and C.iii only. However, comments on C.ii are welcome. **

Substantiating comment:

There is no doubt that the research carried out by members of the group is not just outstanding by academic standards but also excellent in terms of relevance. Here one should bear in mind that these results do not come in terms of tangible technological innovations but rather of bringing forth knowledge and understanding of the past. Relevance is thus mostly relevance in enhancing self-understanding and hence understanding. As to engagement in dissemination and in contributing on regional or local cooperation, it seems that the group does very well indeed. The focus on building a bridge between the Portuguese past and modern currents in science, technology and medicine studies (STMS) is a choice well made. The site visit confirmed the overall positive assessment of the scientific program and allowed to clarify questions that initially required answering. Collaboration between the Centre's research groups is outstanding: senior as well as junior researchers are very well linked (e.g. Journal Club, international activities, co-applications). Doctoral training is excellent and the quality of the programme very high, as was confirmed by the PhD students. Research funding is not confined to FCT or Portugal. CIHCT is also constitutionally multidisciplinary or even interdisciplinary, since it does bring in input from the social sciences. The degree of internationalization also is admirable.

D. Feasibility of the work plan and reasonability of the requested budget:

5 /5

i.) Organisation of the programme in terms of the proposed objectives and resources (budget, duration, infrastructures); organisation and work environment, with special focus on the adequacy of the research team's critical mass to perform the proposed objectives and on the management of resources directed to research activities, which includes supervision of postgraduate students and post-doctoral involvement in RD activities;

ii.) Adequacy of proposed budget to accomplish the proposed strategic programme;

iii.) Institutional resources (technical, scientific, organisational and managerial) of the participating entities. The commitment of the host institution in providing the manpower and material resources to implement the proposed programme is especially valued.

Substantiating comment:

This relatively young centre (fusion of two centres in 2007) is organized extremely well, and the two research groups seem to profit from manifold synergies. This allowed them to reach a critical mass and to increase their international visibility. At the site visit several responsible persons from the University expressed their full support of the Centre. The Centre's management is mindful, efficient and cooperative. The skills and the composition of the research teams is excellent or exceptional - note that there is a good balance of seniors and juniors, and not an excessive amount of PhD students. The budget seems to be adequate, and a good portion of the funding is allocated to young scholars (recruited through international calls). The budget also caters for something that is a must in modern academia: for arranging conferences, for sending students abroad and for taking care of visitors and incomers to the unit. Also the needs of the country as a whole are catered for, with summer schools and other like activities being planned.

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E. Impact of the scientific, technological and cultural output:

5 /5

i.) Production of knowledge likely to stimulate a knowledge-based economy and likely to be used by the productive structures, when applicable;

ii.) Contribution of the RD Unit to the national and regional economic growth and development;

iii.) Knowledge and technology transfer and its dissemination.

** The score must be based on E.i and E.iii only. However, comments on C.ii are welcome. **

Substantiating comment:

The research group is aware that this is a crucial point for the success of their Centre. Correspondingly they deliberately invest much effort in this regard. E.g. they just submitted a project following a call by the municipality (New vision of Lisbon). The researchers are also very demanded by the community as, for instance, curators for local exhibitions. All in all the Centre contributes through dissemination of its knowledge in a substantial way to the cultural development of the Region.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Laboratory intensity level

Level validated:

(High - Medium - Low/Null)

Low or absent

Substantiating comment (non compulsory):

2. Basic and applied research/experimental development share

Basic/applied share validated:

100 / 0

(100%= fully basic - 0%=fully Applied and/or Experimental development; If shared, indicated as XX/xx, with basic research share always in first position)

Substantiating comment (non compulsory):

Overall Conclusions:

Substantiating comment, specifying key strengths and weaknesses (if any).

The site visit was planned thoroughly and managed highly professionally. The results of the SWOT analysis clearly mirrored the strengths and the fields of action for the coming years; they were very well presented by the Centre's coordinator. Other Unit leaders presented their achievements and goals highly effectively. Common to all is a great openness to new cutting-edge scientific themes and at the same time a careful and coherent pursuit of the research aims. All in all the site visit could confirm the excellent impression from the consensus report:

- CIUHCT is a growing unit with an excellent scientific output in terms of publications and at the same time contributing in a substantial way to the dissemination of knowledge in culture and society.
- It is internationally visible and occupies a distinctive niche in STMS (Science, Technology, Medicine Studies).
- The institutional setting seems very strong, with involvement of junior and senior scholars in the right mix.
- The support from the University as well as the Unit's management is very good.
- One of the strongest points of CIUHCT is that it has sought company with the most vigorous centres of STMS in Europe and North America.