

**Evaluation Panel: THEMATIC AREAS - Mediterranean Studies: Agro-food Systems, Water and Energy Resources, Cultural Heritage, and Tourism, Hospitality and Hotel Management**

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**R&D Unit:** Centro de Investigação em Turismo, Sustentabilidade e Bem-estar (CinTurs)

**Coordinator:** Patrícia Susana Lopes Guerrilha dos Santos Pinto Oom do Valle

**Integrated PhD Researchers:** 35

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**Overall Quality Grade:** VERY GOOD

**Evaluation Criteria Ratings**

- (A) Quality, merit, relevance and internationalization of the R&D activities of the Integrated Researchers in the R&D Unit Application: 4
- (B) Merit of the team of Integrated Researchers: 4
- (C) Appropriateness of objectives, strategy, plan of activities and organization: 5

**Base Funding for (2020-2023):** 518 K€

**Recommended Programmatic Support**

PhD Fellowships: 8

Programmatic Funding: 450 K€, including for 2 (1 Auxiliar, 1 Principal) New PhD Researchers Contracts.

**Justification, Comments and Recommendations**

CinTurs is the result of the reorientation of CIEO (Research for Spatial and Organizational Dynamics) to the study of tourism, reflecting FCT's reorientation of scientific areas from 7 to 41. The current Centre benefits from the strong productivity of the tourism group. This new focus on tourism is a therefore a significant strength of the group and is designed to deliver a productive research Centre.

CinTurs is an interdisciplinary research Centre that combines approaches from social sciences to to produce and transfer knowledge in tourism and hospitality with the goal of contributing to three research themes:

- Sustainable tourism and territories;
- Tourism and hospitality competitiveness and governance;
- Tourism and stakeholders' well-being.

These themes are highly relevant to the region and to Portugal as a whole. They overtly map onto the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Whilst it is not possible to encompass all themes within a research Centre, the group may wish to consider a stronger focus on climate change and tourism.

It is clear from the application that the group is leveraging from the results of their research in terms of publication outputs, knowledge transfer and conference activity. The Centre has undertaken a significant number of both national and international projects and the research themes above are designed to focus the research effort here, although this will represent a perennial challenge in terms of possibly restricting opportunities. The Centre has been successful in leveraging knowledge creation through their national and international research projects. This is ongoing and both successful and productive. This is a strength of the Centre.

The Centre has an active PhD network with a clear and transparent strategy of support to these PhD research students. There is a fixed annual research funding per student and the Centre has a responsive attitude to requests for research support, including short courses. This is a clear strength of the Centre.

The Centre is to be congratulated on its knowledge transfer and exchange activities, through conferences and also the journals that they edit.

The Centre has a good track record in terms of internationalization. The visit demonstrated the significant advances in internationalization including international visiting researchers, conferences and collaborators. This is a key strength of the Centre.

CinTurs has Executive, Coordinator, Monitoring and Scientific Boards. The Executive Board includes the President and the two Vice-Presidents of the Unit. The External Monitoring Board includes both Portuguese and international

members. The Scientific Board includes all integrated PhD members. The coordination of the committees and leadership of the executive board was less clear and this is a weakness. The external advisory board would benefit from a refresh including up and coming tourism researchers from other geographical regions. The Panel was impressed by the gender balance of the Centre in general, and the leadership team in particular.

The Centre is well organised and understands how to facilitate excellent research. Both the researchers and the PhD students clearly felt empowered by the Centre and to be a part of its community. The Centre is overtly supportive of junior researchers, although there is no formal mentoring scheme - which is something that should be considered.

The Centre's group of integrated researchers is strong, engaging in innovative and quality research and enhancing knowledge in the tourism domain and moving the research agenda forward. The group is led by a small group of excellent researchers with publications on 4\* and 3\* journals including Tourism Management and the Journal of Sustainable Tourism. Members of the team of integrated researchers are on editorial boards, actively engage in collaborations both nationally and internationally and are highly active in the Centre's projects, either as principal or co-investigators or as members of project teams. The integrated researchers are also highly involved in postgraduate supervision, service to the subject area through, say the organization of conferences, and are also engaged with the tourism sector both in the region and nationally. The team is to be congratulated on the managed balance of research activities which are instrumental in delivering excellence in research outputs.

The Centre's strategy is to be applauded – it is both clear and well articulated and overtly designed to deliver quality research outputs, both locally and internationally. The coherence of the strategy mission, objectives and annual plans is excellent.

The strategy is focused on a number of key objectives shaping the future of the Centre:

- Commitment to excellence in scientific production through publications, conferences and the editing of two journals. Productivity of researchers is monitored using a series of metrics and this will lead to an increase in quality of outputs.
- Encouraging the exchange of knowledge through organization of conferences and training. Aside from the conferences, knowledge transfer tends to be within the region, fulfilling the Centre's regional mandate. Balancing the international and regional mandate is a challenge but the Centre seems to be managing this tension well. Consideration of the 'impact' of the Centre's research would add a useful discipline to the Centre's activities and metrics.
- Multidisciplinary research and collaborative processes. The Centre is clearly highly collaborative and encourages active collaboration both within the Centre and with external partners. The multidisciplinary nature of tourism is embraced by the Centre and reflected in its projects, publications and conferences and this is to be applauded. Recognition of the imperative for collaboration in tourism research is also a strength of the Centre.
- Internationalisation is a key strategic objective for the Centre and this has a clear strategy for the future. This is a strength of the Centre.

The requested budget includes items for innovative 'wearable' software, which allow for cutting edge research; GIS software which will be essential for the work on destinations, as well as more standard software licenses such as NVivo and structural equation modeling. We strongly favor the continued internationalization of the Centre and would like to see that enhanced; we therefore recommend that 100,000 euros are devoted to this from the FCT programmatic budget. The project funding for the Centre is appropriate for the size and ambition of the Centre.

Given the early stage of the development of the Centre, we recommend that 2 integrated researchers are provided from the FCT budget. These should be at principal and auxiliary level to allow for the building of capacity in the Centre.

The Centre's pluriannual plan for PhD fellowships is ambitious, reflecting the philosophy of the Centre overall. The PhD themes are relevant and cutting edge; all will be of benefit to the region. Prioritising upon these themes will be a challenge for the management of the Centre. The PhD fellowships also integrate collaborations with other universities and this is to be applauded. We recommend that 8 PhD fellowships are allocated to the Centre.

We recommend the partial application of funding to be received in internationalisation as this is a priority for the Centre.