

**REPORT FROM THE
EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD of CEDIS**

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Having analysed CEDIS activities in the period between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2023, and on the basis of the criteria of evaluation established in Annex 1 of the “Rules of Procedure for the External Advisory Board”, these are my findings and recommendations in relation to:

Criteria A

1) clear statement on the advancement of knowledge and respective impact with a reference to publications or any other relevant research and innovation indicators:

2) degree of internationalisation and collaborative research of CEDIS outputs:

3) advanced training of researchers including Master’s and PhD students or postdocs:

4) the development and consolidation of careers at different levels, including the integration of researchers into permanent positions, and the impact of FCT scientific employment instruments on the activities of CEDIS:

5) the quality of hosting conditions of researchers, such as, mentoring plans, gender and equality and inclusiveness actions and fair and transparent evaluation mechanisms, among others:

6) promotion and dissemination of scientific and technological research, dissemination of results and actions to promote scientific culture, including, the organization of conferences, colloquia, and seminars:

7) knowledge and technology transfer, such as the creation of spin-offs or industry partnerships:

8) effort to secure funding from diverse sources, national and international (e.g. ERC, EU funding, regional and/or other from funding agencies):

9) preservation, curation and dissemination of CEDIS results and data, respecting the principles and practices of Open Science; promotion of scientific and technological culture (outreach); actions of scientific, technological, cultural, artistic, social or economic relevance to society; existence of Data Policies:

Assessment and recommendations

CEDIS' strategic objectives are clearly articulated and demonstrate a firm commitment to pioneering legal scholarship. The Centre promotes progressive legal scholarship through an interdisciplinary socio-legal approach, combining research with education to have a profound impact on multiple facets of societal development. In line with the European Agenda for Knowledge and Innovation and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, CEDIS prioritises sustainability and inclusivity in its three-pronged mission: innovative research, transformative education and meaningful value creation, with a focus on protecting people, the planet and stronger institutions.

The significance of the CEDIS agenda is manifested in the shift from conventional legal education and research to a paradigm deeply rooted in societal demands. By combining academic research with tangible societal contributions, CEDIS underscores the critical role of academic institutions in addressing global challenges such as sustainability, social justice and institutional resilience. This interdisciplinary approach fosters innovation and cultivates a collaborative, solutions-oriented research ethos. CEDIS's commitment to actionable engagement ensures that theoretical advances in law tangibly benefit communities and influence policymaking, positioning it at the forefront of the legal academy. The Centre's thematic groups innovatively address a wide range of contemporary socio-legal issues, each of which is instantiated in dedicated knowledge centres and research projects.

The scope of CEDIS is remarkable, encompassing numerous initiatives and projects that promise delivery and capacity for world-class internationalisation. This is evidenced by significant contributions to leading international journals and topics such as Artificial Intelligence, which are timely and potentially transformative. Initiatives such as the Green Lab have gained international recognition, and refugee outreach activities exemplify CEDIS's rich diversity, which presents both opportunities and challenges.

Opportunities arise from the concentration of diverse scientific activities at CEDIS, which stimulates intellectual novelty and attracts national and international recognition. However, there is a risk of resource dilution due to the broad thematic coverage. Future strategies may need to reassess issues of dispersion and over-diversification and refocus on the main thematic lines. The existing structure of thematic centres, knowledge centres, observatories and projects may benefit from simplification and amplification to highlight synergies and interdisciplinary interactions. Observatories could more explicitly link outreach and social impact, delineating the continuum and dialogue between basic research and policy influence and intervention.

Criteria B

10) evidence of international and national recognition of the research team:

11) evidence of interaction and benefits for society:

12) skills and composition of the research team to adequately execute the proposed programme:

13) ability to successfully compete for national and international research grants and contracts:

Assessment and recommendations

The 2018-2023 period is a demonstration of CEDIS' international recognition, marked by the successful attraction of external funding for 15 projects, both nationally (including 4 FCT-funded projects) and internationally, predominantly through EU grants. The many awards and honours received by the research team are testament to the excellence of the Centre and provide a solid foundation for CEDIS to develop into a pre-eminent, sustainable, high-intensity research centre.

A recommendation for CEDIS is to consider a strategic realignment of its activities and resources towards emerging areas of research. This could entail a recalibration of the breadth of the Centre's research activities towards a more focused intellectual direction, possibly aligned with the thematic centres/lines that traverse the Knowledge Centres, Observatories and Research Projects. Reassessing the range of collaborations between different groups and initiating new areas of research can be achieved through a thorough review of growth areas. Structuring outputs, such as projects and publications, according to Thematic Centre/Lines would help to identify strategic areas and strengthen the intellectual trajectory of CEDIS.

Criteria C

14) quality, merit, relevance, impact, originality/differentiation, and ambition of the objectives and the overall proposed strategic programme for the next five years, including ethical concerns, whenever applicable, Open Science, gender and data policies, budget, and programmatic:

15) appropriate CEDIS management and organizational structure, including science communication and outreach activities, citizen science, technology transfer and IP protection policies:

16) Plans for advanced training, particularly the scientific conditions to support PhD programmes, evidencing the benefit to the PhD programme from the proximity of research activity of CEDIS:

17) Adequate HR management, including developing the condition to attract and retain qualified human resources, such as plans for hiring new researchers:

18) Career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their careers, regardless of their contractual situation, including for researchers on fixed-term contracts. Please refer to the R&D Unit strategy for countering precarity and integrating researchers into permanent career positions. Whenever applicable, please refer to applications within the FCT-Tenure programme, namely CEDIS Chairs, in coherence with the dimension of CEDIS, its current Human Resources profile, and its trajectory:

19) any other criteria:

Assessment and recommendations

CEDIS has developed a carefully crafted strategic plan for the next four years, covering a wide range of objectives categorised under input, activities, output, outcome and impact. The strategy emphasises the importance of transparent management, securing external funding and promoting interdisciplinary and international collaboration. By emphasising innovative legal research and educational initiatives that involve students in practical projects, CEDIS aims to increase public engagement and ensure that research contributes to the betterment of society. The plan includes increasing the number of academic publications and undertaking studies for public bodies to promote societal improvement through strategic partnerships and effective communication. Research priorities are aligned with sustainable development goals in areas such as justice, security and human well-being, reflecting a comprehensive approach to integrating legal research into societal progress.

In terms of research planning, while CEDIS has effectively assessed resource needs, it could pivot towards emerging areas, particularly when considering new permanent posts, using field activities as a reflective example.

In terms of communication strategy, the production of a newsletter to showcase the innovative work of CEDIS could broaden recognition within the Portuguese context and beyond, and foster opportunities for collaboration. The proposed newsletter would serve to disseminate research innovations and findings, complementing a broader communication plan. Internally, the "weekly opportunities report" is a great idea.

In terms of career development and doctoral support, the report briefly touches on the importance of training and the provision of doctoral fellowships. The involvement of PhD students in research related to NOVA School of Law's programmes is crucial and future strategies could include funding for student-led events. Post-doctoral fellows and researchers could benefit significantly from structured mentoring programmes to enhance their academic and professional development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sofia Abreu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and 'A'.

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