
CICS.NOVA

FINE-TUNING STRATEGY FOR SCIENTIFIC LEADERSHIP: THE TURNING POINT

2024 Action Plan







CICS.NOVA | Fine-Tuning strategy for scientific leadership: The turning point
2024 Action Plan
November 2024

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This work is financed by national funds through FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P., within the scope of the project «UIDB/04647/2020» and «UIDP/04647/2020» of CICS.NOVA – Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Sciences of Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

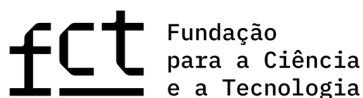
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CICS.NOVA | Fine-tuning strategy for scientific leadership: the turning point

2024 Action Plan

The Action Plan for the year 2024, called Fine-tuning strategy for scientific leadership: the turning point, represents one step forward in the fulfillment of the strategy implemented since 2020. The year of 2024 is a turning point between two periods of FCT funding. So, the action plan for 2024 should be seen as the launch year of the new activity plan for the next five years. It proposes a scientific program already underway and that stems from the Activity Plan for 2025-2029 presented in CICS.NOVA's application to the FCT evaluation process of the R&D Units 2023-2024. The project maintains the current macro-structural arrangement while encompassing formal and functional modifications to the governing bodies and the organisation of our scientific activities, fulfilling what was defined in CICS.NOVA's previous action plan.

To emphasise CICS.NOVA's distinctive character and leverage the centre's main features - national scope and regional presence, disciplinary diversity and thematic collaboration - the Action Plan started in 2024 is designed around three components:

- 1. Key Societal Challenges**
- 2. Goals and Objectives**
- 3. Research Groups**

All together, these three pieces will contribute to facilitate the implementation of our scientific strategy along 2025-2029 period.



1. Key Societal Challenges

CICS.NOVA's differentiating strategic framework takes advantage of the diverse expertise of our researchers and the geographical scope of the centre to tackle four scientific and societal challenges that will be central over the next 5 years. The Research Groups will lead our work in these key areas, while continuing to welcome other consolidated and emerging research themes. In line with UN SDGs, the key challenges will specifically addressed are:

1. Climate Change

The climate crisis and sustainability require integrating contributions from environmental to social sciences. CICS.NOVA has excellent competences in this area, from ethnographical and participative approaches to climate action, to research on the possibilities of mitigating or reversing changes on the sea and land, or on the impacts of individual and collective social action. We now aim to understand the structural dimensions of this emergent issue; how it disproportionately affects vulnerable populations and territories, reinforcing and creating new inequalities of class, gender and race and ethnicity; and to document and analyse how institutional and citizen responses are organised.

2. Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence

The digital era gains new momentum with the rapid spread and development of Digitalization and AI, with impacts on all spheres of social life, including work, an area in which CICS.NOVA's researchers are recognized experts. We will further explore the potential of AI in academia as an heuristic resource and the ethical concerns raised by its use. Additionally, we will develop theoretical and methodological tools to investigate the social, economic, cultural and territorial implications of the ever-accelerating processes of digitalisation.

3. Generations and Demographic Transition

Population ageing and demographic imbalances in Europe and in the world are changing the pluridimensional dynamics of intergenerational relationships, creating new societal and scientific challenges.

CICS.NOVA currently produces high-impact research in areas such as demographic trends; social practices of and policies oriented towards specific age groups (e.g., children, youth or older people); health services; long-term care; migration; housing; or work and labour.

In the following years we will integrate this extensive research to problematize demographic changes and inform political decision-making based on relevant empirical data.

4. (The Making of) Science for Society

The urge of science to overcome social problems has steered knowledge production mostly to address politically and economically pre-determined interests while depriving epistemological questioning and long-term research. Building upon CICS.NOVA's work on this theme, this strand will develop theoretical, methodological and empirical studies that address the impacts of science's steering on knowledge production and critically reflect on how to creatively engage with society while not compromising the more extended role of science.

CICS.NOVA comprises a diverse array of researchers with specialised skills and experience in these fields, capable of leading teams, securing funding, and conducting genuinely innovative and impactful research. However, to achieve the desired level of ambition, the action plan for 2024 and beyond entails bolstering teams, recruiting new researchers, allocating exploratory funding, and enhancing coordination with postgraduate training programs. These efforts aim to create the optimal conditions for strengthening and enhancing our research endeavours.

Work in these key areas, aligned with FCSH's and our hubs' strategic axes, will critically contribute for the accomplishment of CICS.NOVA's Goals and Objectives.

2. Goals and Objectives

Key societal challenges are intricately linked to the scientific goals and objectives defined for 2024 and beyond. Efforts in these areas will play a critical role in achieving our overarching goals, which include leading scientific training and fostering sustainable scientific careers, establishing CICS.NOVA as an international authority in the study of complex themes, and conducting socially responsible research that spans various scales, from local to global contexts.

These goals are operationalized through a series of objectives, each with specific targets to be met:

1. Consolidating the integration of CICS.NOVA's research and advanced training activities by institutionalising the Skills4Science Initiative, targeting graduate students and early career researchers.

This will include new and consolidated activities such as CICS.NOVA's Summer School or the Be my Guest seminars, both involving invited keynote speakers and focusing on themes aligned with our identified challenges. CICS.NOVA will fund students' participation in scientific conferences, training courses and short-term visits to international academic institutions and will grant a best thesis award every year.

Full-time researchers will be encouraged to participate in Open Days, teaching, and mentoring.

Twelve doctoral fellowships will be awarded to students enrolled in CICS.NOVA's associated programmes. This is expected to increase student's ability to finish their projects in a timely manner and to increase our 4-year completion rate to 75%.

A graduate students' committee, composed of the 6 elected representatives in the Scientific Council (1/RG), will be constituted to propose measures promoting their research conditions and integration in our centre.

2. Attracting and retaining researchers in stable scientific careers

We will recruit 8 early career (junior) and 8 assistant fixed-term researchers in two streams (2025; 2028). These contracts and the new 9 Research Unit Chair positions proposed under the FCT tenure programme are fully aligned with the challenges mentioned above. Furthermore, our hubs' collaborative work will be strengthened via 5 additional FCT-tenure positions.

Scientists' retention will be promoted through participation in initiatives such as the MCSA Staff exchange, securing adequate material and scientific conditions for their work, and fostering a dynamic work environment.

This hiring strategy is aligned with our scientific strategy; the current number of full-time researchers (3 post-doc fellows; 16 fixed-term and 3 permanent researchers), and with the necessary growth of our team to accomplish our proposed goals. All recruitments will proceed via international Open Calls complying with the European Charter for Researchers and institutional Equality and Diversity plans.

3. Supporting the quality and scientific impact of CICS.NOVA's research while complying with Open Science's best standards for publishing and data management

Strategies for increasing CICS.NOVA's reach and impact, starting in 2024, include (a) providing funds for exploratory team projects (8 grants; 1 year projects; in societal challenges); (b) supporting (inter)national applications (FCT; ERCs, MSCA; Horizon, others); (c) promoting scientific debate on the identified key areas through the organisation of 1 annual international conference per year (Call for Papers; keynote speakers) and maintaining other formats (e.g., Permanent seminars; Interdisciplinary day); (d) supporting participation in international conferences/networks; (e) open-access publishing, including our own journals and collections; (f) funding translation and open access; (g) amplifying visibility and impact via collaborations with reputable open-access platforms; (h) engaging in advocacy efforts to promote open-access publishing; (i) monitoring publications' impact; (j) continuing to attribute the yearly CICS.NOVA publication award. Likewise, CICS.NOVA is fully committed to continue (k) upholding data privacy according to FCT principles and international best practices. CICS.NOVA aims to diversify funding and increase it by 20% in team grants; become a leader of projects within Horizon Europe; be awarded 1 MSCA per RG, and at least 1 ERC grant.

4. To strengthen the social impact of CICS.NOVA's research, namely via knowledge transfer, co-creation and outreach activities, by developing the following activities:

(a) Applications to calls for knowledge transfer and co-creation activities in articulation with the FCSH Innovation and value creation office; (b) development of impact assessment tools, with key indicators to evaluate stakeholders' engagement, immediate impact and its sustainability; (c) create a "social impact seal" certifying projects meeting the proposed indicators;

(d) continue to develop the seminar “Talking about social sciences” with academic and civil society actors; (e) grant CICS.NOVA’s Co-creation and Extension Award; and (f) nominate an external stakeholder committee to support (b), (c), and (e). CICS.NOVA aims to diversify and increase funding for knowledge transfer and co-creation activities by 20%.

Outreach will be strengthened through our website, newsletter, social media channels with communication strategies being monitored and enhanced through communication consulting services (budgeted). At a different level, we will institutionalise partnerships with high schools, engaging researchers in outreach activities and inviting high school students to participate in CICS.NOVA’s events.

Following the difficulties arising from the last evaluation cycle, the critical changes introduced in our action plan for 2024 and the following 5 years, and the consistent growth of the last 5 years, we aim to become scientific leaders in the 4 identified key areas of research. This path will be supported by CICS.NOVA’s commitment to sustainable scientific careers; coordination with graduate programmes; scientific quality as asserted by successful applications to (inter)national funds, publication of influential papers, and events’ organisation; and will result in scientifically and socially impactful research.



3. Research Groups

CICS.NOVA's scientific activities will remain organised around Research Groups (RGs). To both reflect the current internal research landscape and create conditions for effectively addressing identified challenges and the aforementioned objectives, it was proposed the following realignment of the RGs (already approved by CICS.NOVA's Scientific Council):

RG1 - Inequalities, Citizenship and Gender aims to characterise the multiple forms of social inequalities and their intersections, as well as their impacts on social inclusion and exclusion. This group covers the following thematic areas: Gender and sexualities; Poverty, social exclusion and vulnerabilities; Artistic practices, activism and citizen participation; Migration, interculturalism, racism and ethnicities; Rights and justice; and Children and young people.

RG 2 - Organisations, Work and Employment addresses the reconfiguration processes within the realm of employment, as well as the dynamics surrounding professional integration, socialisation, and mobility. This RG focuses on the following key-areas: Work, employment, and technology; Social and technological Innovation; Organisational culture and models; Human resources development; Digital economy.

RG3 - Urban and Territorial Dynamics aims to produce and disseminate critical knowledge about urban and territorial issues, from the most socially relevant dynamics and problems of our time, to theoretically and epistemologically driven interrogations about the spatialisation of social structures and practices. This RG encompasses the following key-areas: segregation and urban-metropolitan inequalities; housing studies; urban transformations, mobility and everyday life; tourism, leisure and nightlife; low-density territories and regional development; and spatial planning.

RG4 - Sustainability and Socio-Ecological Systems aims to explore the multifaceted concept of sustainability. The research group addresses the following key-areas: Territorial food systems and value chain; Desertification and climate change; Carbon neutrality and energy transition; Conservation and participatory management of natural resources; Human ecology; Oceans and coastal areas.

RG5 – Health, Population and Well-being has as main objective to understand the dynamics related to the health and well-being of populations, covering the following key-areas: health policies, organisations and professions; population dynamics and ageing; determinants and inequalities in health and well-being; mental health and burnout.

RG6 – Education, Science and Culture research is based on plural theoretical and methodological approaches to address major scientific questions in the following key-areas: Social contexts and community dynamics in education, Educational and cultural policies and practices, Inclusion, equity and accessibility, Intercultural mediation and social education, Social studies of science and technology, Science and society.

Following CICS.NOVA's significant growth over the last 5 years, we aim to address the four identified scientific and societal challenges and become scientific leaders in these arenas. The new Research Groups will be set-up from 2025, and will lead our work in these key areas, while continuing to welcome other consolidated and emerging research themes.



CICS.NOVA Research Groups: New challenges 2025-2029

RG1: Social Inequalities and Public Action

RG1 aims to characterise the multiple forms of social inequalities and their intersections, as well as their impacts on social inclusion and exclusion. After 2025, this group will be reconfigured, following the realignment of the RGs already approved by CICS.NOVA's Scientific Council. Thus, 2024 will be a transition year to the new RG1 - Inequalities, Citizenship and Gender.

Mostly focusing on social class, gender, racial/ethnicity and age inequality axes, as well as migratory processes, and integrating researchers from FCSH and all hubs, it covers the following thematic areas: (a) Gender and sexualities; (b) Poverty, social exclusion and vulnerabilities; (c) Artistic practices, activism and citizen participation; (d) Migration, interculturalism, racism and ethnicities; (e) Rights and justice; (f) Children and young people.

RG1 is articulated with the National Observatory of Violence and Gender and the Observatory of Youth in Azores, with particularly relevant roles on informing, developing and monitoring policy-making. Also, it is associated with advanced training, mainly through Master/PhD programmes in Sociology and Gender studies in different locations.

To tighten the articulation with advanced training and attract and retain researchers in stable scientific careers, in the following years, CICS.NOVA will reinforce RG1 team recruiting at least 2 additional PhD fellows; 1 junior and 1 assistant fixed-term researchers and, via the FCT-tenure Programme, 1 permanent assistant researcher in Citizenship, Law and Childhood and 1 assistant professor in Sociological Theories and International Migrations (CICS.NOVA Chairs). Articulation with Leiria and the Azores hubs will count on recruiting 1 Adjunct Professor in Sociology/Anthropology and 1 Assistant Professor in Sociology, respectively.

With this team, RG1 will contribute to UN SDGs 10 and 5, contributing to reducing inequalities and promoting gender equality. Between 2025-9, RG1 researchers will also address how inequalities frame or are framed by Climate change; Digitalization and artificial intelligence; Demographic transitions and Scientific transformations, consolidating RG1's scientific and social impact.



RG2: Citizenship, Work and Technology

RG2's primary objective is to study the reconfiguration processes within the realm of employment and the dynamics surrounding professional integration, socialisation, and mobility. After 2025, this group will be reconfigured, following the realignment of the RGs already approved by CICS.NOVA's Scientific Council. Thus, 2024 will be a transition year to the new RG 2 – Organisations, Work and Employment.

This RG encompasses the following thematic areas: (a) Work, Employment, and Technology; (b) Social and Technological Innovation; (c) Organisational Culture and Models; (d) Human Resources Development; and (e) Digital Economy.

The Observatory of Technology Assessment, an institutional structure responsible for communicating with members of the parliament and civil society on science and technology themes and supporting science and innovation policy, is intricately linked to RG2, with synergies between these two structures fostering knowledge transfer and co-creation activities.

The articulation with advanced training is mostly promoted by the participation of RG2 researchers in FCSH's Sociology master; the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master of Excellence "Transition, Innovation and Sustainability Environments" as well as through CICS.NOVA's association with the Open Soc PhD Programme.

CICS.NOVA will strongly reinforce RG2 team recruiting at least 2 additional PhD fellows; 2 junior and 2 assistant fixed-term researchers and, via the FCT-tenure Programme, 1 permanent Assistant researcher in Science, Knowledge and Innovation (CICS.NOVA Chair). This will contribute for the articulation with advanced training and integrating researchers in scientific careers.

Furthermore, RG2 holds significant potential for substantial contributions towards addressing the challenges posed by the "Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence" especially considering that some of its researchers are actively engaged in this field, as well as by "Science for Society". Its research will contribute to UN SDGs 8 and 9, namely promoting innovation policies oriented towards inclusive and sustainable economic growth and stimulating innovation, linking research and innovation outputs.

RG3: Cities, Environment and Regional Development

RG3's main objective is to produce and disseminate critical knowledge about a wide range of urban and territorial issues. After 2025, this group will be reconfigured, following the realignment of the RGs already approved by CICS.NOVA's Scientific Council. Thus, 2024 will be a transition year to the new RG3 – Urban and Territorial Dynamics.

Within the group, composed mainly of researchers with geography and sociology backgrounds, we concurrently approach urban and territorial dynamics from a socio-cultural perspective and with a focus on politico-economic relations and power at multiple scales, as evidenced by RG3 thematic areas: (a) Segregation and urban-metropolitan inequalities; (b) Housing studies; (c) Urban transformations, mobility and everyday life; (d) Tourism, leisure and nightlife; (e) Low-density territories and regional development; and (f) spatial planning.

RG3 draws on our wide range of academic expertise and space-based research methodologies – from ethnography to cartographies – and on collaborations across CICS.NOVA's and other (inter)national institutions to contribute to the consolidation of our centre as a reference in this field.

RG3 participates in advanced training in all HEI associated with CICS.NOVA. The Master and PhD Programmes in Urban Studies (NOVA & Iscte) will continue to be at the core of several strands of collaborative and interdisciplinary research.

CICS.NOVA will strongly reinforce RG3 team recruiting at least 2 additional PhD fellows; 1 junior and 1 assistant fixed-term researchers and, via the FCT-tenure Programme, 1 Principal Researcher in Urban Dynamics and Tourism. This will contribute for the articulation with advanced training and integrating researchers in scientific careers.

The group will promote participatory approaches to urban research in partnership with non-academic organisations. RG3 researchers will also continue to inform public policy with several instruments and capacities, from advising policy makers (e.g. in the Strategic Council for Metropolitan Development of Lisbon), to voicing critique through different channels. Future research, aligned with UNSDGs 11 and 10, will contribute to the identified unit's challenges.

RG4: Modeling and Planning Systems

RG4's main objective is to produce and disseminate critical knowledge about modeling and planning systems. After 2025, this group will be reconfigured, following the realignment of the RGs already approved by CICS.NOVA's Scientific Council. Thus, 2024 will be a transition year to the new RG4 – Sustainability and Socio-Ecological Systems.

RG4 will be a research group dedicated to exploring sustainability in its many dimensions, in alignment with UN SDGs 2, 7, 11-15. This RG will focus on the following thematic areas: (a) Carbon neutrality, through mitigation of the heat island effect, implementation of green infrastructure and other measures, (b) Energy transition, through sustainable planning of renewable energy and strategies to reduce consumption, (c) Land use land cover change dynamics, planning and territorial resilience; (d) Agro-ecological transition, (e) Territorial food systems, the value chain (including food waste), public policies and food governance and (f) The management of coastal zones, beaches and protected areas.

CICS.NOVA will strongly reinforce RG4 team and promote employment stability, via the FCT-tenure, awarding three new permanent contracts (1 assistant professor in Geography and Territorial Planning, 1 assistant researcher in Remote Sensing and GIS and 1 Principal Researcher in Environmental Sustainability and Socio-ecological Systems; all 3 being CICS.NOVA Chairs). RG4 will also recruit at least 2 additional PhD fellowships; and 1 junior and 1 assistant fixed-term positions.

The Master's and PhD programs in Geography, Climate Change, Sustainable Urbanism, and Human Ecology will remain central to collaborative and interdisciplinary research. Students will gain hands-on research experience through tasks like data collection and thesis execution. Activities like workshops, conference organisation, and scientific publications will continue, while strengthening our commitment to addressing CICS.NOVA's challenges on "Climate Change" and "Science for Society". RG4 will provide academic insights on relevant topics and respond to civil society actors' requests using co-creation and participatory approaches. We aim to maintain existing institutional links, seek new partnerships, and explore new research avenues.

RG5: Health, Population and Wellbeing

The main objective of RG5 is to understand the problems and dynamics related to the health and well-being of populations, covering the following thematic areas: (a) Health policies, organisations and professions; (b) Population dynamics and ageing; (c) Determinants and inequalities in health and well-being; and (d) Mental health. It strongly contributes to NOVAsaúde strategic goals.

To reinforce the RG5 team in 2025-9, several measures have been initiated, including integrating 3 junior researcher positions into current project applications for national and international funding. In addition, CICS.NOVA plans to enhance RG5 activities by recruiting at least 2 junior and 2 assistant fixed-term researchers, and, via the FCT-tenure Programme, 1 Assistant Professor in Sociological Theories and Social Sciences Methodologies; CICS.NOVA Chair; and 1 Adjunct Professor in Sociology/Social work (CICS.NOVA IPLeia).

This will contribute for integrating researchers in scientific careers and the articulation with advanced training. This articulation is primarily facilitated by the active involvement of RG5 researchers in NOVA FCSH's Sociology and Human Ecology master's programs, the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master of Excellence "Transition, Innovation, and Sustainability Environments," and the Open Soc PhD Programme, of which CICS.NOVA is a partner organisation.

To enhance the social and policy impact of RG5's research in terms of knowledge co-creation and transfer, research activities and outputs will be aligned with UN SDGs 3, 5 and 10, and will address the "Generations and Demographic Transition" societal challenge identified by CICS.NOVA. This entails stimulating connections between researchers and decision-makers and civil society stakeholders, an experience that can be mobilised to reflect on CICS.NOVA challenge on "Science for Society". The establishment of institutional partnerships within collaborative projects will be encouraged to leverage researchers' skills and resources.

RG6: Education Knowledge and Culture

After 2025, this group will be reconfigured, following the realignment of the RGs already approved by CICS.NOVA's Scientific Council. Thus, 2024 will be a transition year to the new RG6 –Education, Science and Culture.

RG6 displays a clear-cut and interdisciplinary approach to education, in a lifelong perspective, the relation between science, technology and society, and culture. The research comprises the following thematic areas: (a) Social contexts and community dynamics in education; (b) Educational and cultural policies and practices; (c) Inclusion, equity and accessibility; (d) Intercultural mediation and social education; (e) Social studies of science and technology; (f) Science and society.

The focus of RG6 will be on pursuing and strengthening interdisciplinary research in its major themes, particularly in the area of social studies of science and culture, aligning with UN SDGs 4, 9 and 10.

CICS.NOVA plans to enhance RG6 activities by recruiting at least 2 additional PhD fellows; 1 junior and 1 assistant fixed-term researchers and, via the FCT-tenure Programme, 1 Assistant Researcher in Sociology and 1 Adjunct Professor in Sociology of Education (CICS.NOVA.IPLeiria); 1 Assistant Professor in Historical Sociology and Sociology of Knowledge (CICS.NOVA Chair). This will contribute for integrating researchers in scientific careers and for the articulation with advanced training, which is also facilitated by the Master in Education Studies, Sociology, and Intercultural Mediation and Social Intervention.

RG6 will remain committed to knowledge transfer and co-creation partnerships with civil society actors, while strengthening its contribution to the development of public policies, but without neglecting the ongoing commitment to scientific publications. Our goal is to increase PhD theses, diversify publication channels for CICS.NOVA projects, and involve students in academic activities, ensuring support without compromising their studies. RG6 researchers will be particularly active addressing the “Digitalization and artificial intelligence” impacts on academia, as well as problematizing the “Science for society”, two of the major challenges identified by CICS.NOVA.

CICS.NOVA Research Groups: Action Plan 2024

RG1: Social Inequalities and Public Action | Dalila Cerejo

This is a period of transition to the RG1 due to upcoming merges and re-structurations of research groups. Hence, this action plan intends to present the major productivity indicators and to lay out some future goals that are believed to be important. But considering the announced future re-alignments, it is for the upcoming coordination to set out major strategic action plans.

In terms of productivity, RG1 demonstrated a considerable evolution from 2022 to 2023. In terms of publications, 38 in total, we highlight 6 indexed at Scopus and Web of Science.

This was a project “ramping up” year so the number of archived project funding wasn’t remarkable. In this matter 2024 will surely be a year of increasing in relate to this indicator. Still, we have been able to consolidate our capability to strengthen scientific impact by getting funding from co-creation and transfer knowledge projects.

The RG1 continues to be a strong one in terms of participation in national and international congresses and conferences. During 2023, our researchers participated in about 22 and this numbers also includes events organization.

Also, RG1 is represented in the most important scientific networks, in executive and board positions, like International Sociological Association and the European Sociological Association.

Because it is a very strong group in advanced training, with about 6 master's and PhD programs, it has been demonstrating its capability to lead our students to the end game of their programs. This is reflected in the number of finished master's and PhD thesis.

Due to mentioned change within the RG structure, the proposed initiatives and concrete actions to improve scientific outputs, are considered structural for any RG. They namely regard the publication dynamics; to deepen the involvement of its PhD students in the center’s activities and publication outputs.

1. Increase the number of publications in indexed journals

- Disseminate the call for papers relevant to the scientific thematic developed in RG1;
- Host a regular meeting gathering all integrated researchers to discuss current publishing opportunities;
- Host regular meetings with our PhD students to encourage publications on an open call for papers within their different areas of research;
- To organize workshops on scientific writing, and other training activities to do with publication, open to all PhD students as well as all the other researchers;

2. Encourage national and international project applications or supervision of individual applications (FCT Doctoral Fellowships; ERS Grants, Marie SkłodowskaCurie Individual Fellowships - MSCA-IF, etc.)

- To provide information about the opening of the calls and specifications;
- Promote support and clarification sessions regarding the above-mentioned open calls (like done in the past).

3. Potentiate internationalization, namely by taking advantage of some researcher's networks in European institutions (like the Council of Europe, EIGE, and other international institutions) to promote the center's activities in Europe and abroad as well as the strong presence of several integrated researchers in multiple international Research networks as well as strong interpersonal connections with researchers from other countries CICS.NOVA:

- To materialize these international networks into specific project proposal designs; – Take advantage of some researcher networks in national policy institutions (like Commission for gender equality, commission for exclusion and poverty, and other national institutions) to promote CICS.NOVA's activities, and scientific outputs and to establish opportunities to formalize joint Co-creation projects;

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- Take advantage of the growing number of PhD students from other countries (namely Gender studies CICS.NOVA PhD program);
 - To attract more visiting scholars
 - Shift the focus from national publications to international publications.

4. Increase national and international research projects with funding

- To promote common research proposals with national and international scope across RG1 thematic research areas;
 - To host regular meetings to analyze open calls and tenders to develop research proposals (namely during the open period of the calls);
- To take advantage of the international research networks that involve RG1 researchers to establish common partnerships for research proposals (ESA-RN11; ISARC51, etc);
- Integration of United Nation Sustainable Development Goals within and across Research Groups' activities and research applications for funding.

5. To take advantage of some integrated research experience in training in specific areas that have to do with social inequalities and public policies and to help CICSNOVA create certified training offers to professionals like (police forces, NGOs, Public Administration, Municipalities, etc)

- To organize a special meeting in order to formalize the list of integrated researchers available as well as promote the institutional formalities needed to formalize this Certified Training.

RG2: Citizenship, Work and Technology | Ricardo Campos

The research group "Citizenship, Work, and Technology" has four areas of expertise, namely: "Work, Organizations, and Professional Trajectories," "Technology, Communication, and Risk," "Political Participation, Activism, and Leadership," and "Rights, Politics, and Justice."

It is our mission to continue with a solid and coherent strategy, aligned with CICSNOVA's major goals outlined since the election of the current executive board. In evaluating the strategy put forth and its outcomes, we believe we are seeing very positive results, particularly when considering the main pillars of our scientific development during the period 2018–2023. The year 2024 marks a new era for CICSNOVA, with the R&D unit's evaluation by FCT, involving a proposal for a new Activity Plan for the next five-year period. Therefore, this year represents a transition period, with the implementation of a new scientific structure and agenda for the R&D Unit. The plan put forward takes into consideration this transitional period and the creation of new RGs resulting from new dynamics and synergies, as well as the implementation of a scientific strategy organized around four Key Societal Challenges: Climate Change, Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence, Generations and Demographic Transition, and (The Making of) Science for Society.

With this in mind, the RG will, on the one hand, maintain the previously defined strategy based on two pillars: "Strengthen science impact: innovation strategies, partnerships, and social impact" and "Strengthen scientific employment: retaining and attracting high-performing researchers." On the other hand, it will implement new endeavors aligned with the main goals of CICSNOVA's Activity Plan for 2025–29. RG2 will focus particularly on:

1. Encouraging RG2's researchers to apply to the new internal procedures for scientific funding.
2. Organizing relevant international meetings with CICSNOVA as organizer or co-organizer. We highlight the following events, which were organized previously and will be included in the 2024 activities: the 5th edition of the "Combart International Conference," taking place in July at the University of Porto (co-organized by CICSNOVA and the University of Porto), as well as the second edition of the International Seminar "Youth(s) and Citizenship," co-organized with the University of Sergipe (Brazil), which started in 2022.

3. Fostering and broadening our international networks, particularly with Brazil, as a growing number of PhD students and post-doctoral researchers are choosing CICSNOVA as their host institution. This presents an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between CICSNOVA and an increasing number of universities in Brazil. In 2024, we expect to host more invited researchers and PhD candidates, particularly from this country.

4. Maintaining high-impact projects targeted at non-academic audiences, based on the principle of knowledge dissemination to society, involving stakeholders and members of civil society. For example, the CriA.On project and website (<https://criaon.fcsh.unl.pt/>) aim to transfer knowledge to families and education professionals regarding youth and childhood use of digital platforms.

5. Promoting the participation of RG2 researchers in CICSNOVA's regular activities (Ciências Sociais à Conversa, Laboratórios de Ciências Sociais, Seminário Permanente) and encouraging them to propose new and innovative initiatives for inclusion in the existing formats of scientific dissemination, thereby promoting bottom-up dynamics. We highlight two initiatives that will be organized and coordinated by RG2 researchers: the webinars "Social Justice in a Digital Society" and the Social Sciences Labs "Ethics and Responsibilities in Qualitative Research."

6. Continuing to stimulate collaboration between different RGs and CICSNOVA's poles to foster the development of collective activities and joint project applications.

7. Encouraging researchers to apply to specific FCT calls, such as the Call for Exploratory Projects in All Scientific Domains and the Call for R&D Projects in All Scientific Domains. These calls, occurring in 2024, represent a valuable opportunity to participate in competitive calls within the Portuguese scientific system. Creating contexts for collective debate and training will be crucial for this endeavor.

To maintain the positive momentum developed in recent years, it is paramount to recruit new researchers to the group, particularly PhD students and junior researchers with a relevant track record. We will do this by continuing the efforts made in previous years, namely by:

1. Encouraging greater involvement of PhD candidates in CICSNOVA's scientific endeavors, by inviting them to: (a) apply for FCT grants; (b) participate in CICSNOVA's events; (c) propose new scientific initiatives; (d) participate in ongoing projects; (e) publish their research in CICSNOVA's journals.
2. Attracting junior/early-career/post-doctoral researchers by: (a) promoting specific opportunities offered by CICSNOVA; (b) inviting new researchers to join applications for various national and international calls aimed at junior researchers, such as the FCT CEEC and Marie Curie Slodowska Fellowships.
3. Attracting invited researchers by fostering existing international scientific networks with several universities and research centers, promoting collaborative initiatives (publications, events, projects).



RG3: Cities, Environment and Regional Development | Patrícia Pereira

RG3's primary mission is to produce and disseminate critical knowledge about a wide range of urban and territorial issues. As 2024 marks a transition year towards the group's reconfiguration in 2025, following the realignment approved by CICS.NOVA's Scientific Council, our focus will be on consolidating our strengths and preparing for future challenges.

Composed mainly of researchers with backgrounds in geography and sociology, RG3 approaches urban and territorial dynamics from a socio-cultural perspective, with a keen focus on politico-economic relations and power dynamics across multiple scales. Our thematic areas encompass: (a) Segregation and urban-metropolitan inequalities; (b) Housing studies; (c) Urban transformations, mobility and everyday life; (d) Tourism, leisure and nightlife; (e) Low-density territories and regional development; and (f) Spatial planning.

Drawing on our diverse academic expertise and space-based research methodologies - ranging from quantitative surveys to ethnography, from GIS to critical cartographies - RG3 leverages collaborations across CICS.NOVA and other (inter)national institutions to solidify our centre's position as a reference in this field. We actively participate in advanced training across all Higher Education Institutions associated with CICS.NOVA.

For 2024, our action plan aligns closely with CICS.NOVA's overarching goals and key societal challenges, as well as UN Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 11. We have structured our objectives as follows:

1. **Leading Scientific Training and Fostering Sustainable Careers:** We will intensify our support for PhD students through funding application assistance and research guidance. Regular group meetings and workshops for postgraduate students will be organized to foster a collaborative research environment. By actively participating in CICS.NOVA's Skills4Science Initiative, contributing to the Summer School, and "Be my Guest" seminars, we aim to enhance the quality of scientific training. Additionally, we will support CICS.NOVA's recruitment plans for PhD fellows, fixed-term and tenured researchers.

2. Establishing CICS.NOVA as an International Reference in Urban and Territorial Dynamics: Our efforts will focus on increasing submissions to international funding bids (e.g., ERCs, MSCA, Horizon Europe) and supporting team/consortium project applications. We will organize writing and publishing workshops to boost high-quality publications and promote debates on improving scientific impact. By aligning our research with CICS.NOVA's key societal challenges, particularly urban aspects of climate change, digitalization, and demographic transition, we will contribute significantly to the centre's annual international conference and overall scientific standing.

3. Conducting Socially Responsible Research Across Scales: We will promote participatory approaches to urban research and develop partnerships with locally embedded non-academic organizations. Our commitment to informing public policy will continue through various channels and geographical scales. By contributing to CICS.NOVA's knowledge transfer, co-creation, and outreach activities, including partnerships with schools, we aim to enhance our social impact. We will actively participate in developing impact assessment tools and strive for the "social impact seal" for RG3 projects, while engaging in CICS.NOVA's "Talking about social sciences" seminar series.

4. Strengthening Interdisciplinary and Methodological Approaches: Leveraging our diverse academic expertise, we will promote space-based research methodologies and foster collaborations across CICS.NOVA and other (inter)national institutions. Our contributions to CICS.NOVA's exploratory team projects in societal challenges will be complemented by active engagement with the centre's efforts in open science and data management.

5. Enhancing Group Identity and Integration within CICS.NOVA: Regular meetings and an annual Group Seminar will be organized to strengthen our collective identity. We will encourage participation in CICS.NOVA's Permanent Seminar and other initiatives, promote in-person gatherings between poles, and intensify communication with post-graduate program coordinators to better integrate research and training.

By implementing this comprehensive plan, RG3 aims to position itself as a key contributor to CICS.NOVA's mission of becoming a leading international research center in social sciences, with a particular focus on urban and territorial dynamics. As we navigate this transitional year, our efforts will be directed towards producing impactful knowledge, fostering sustainable scientific careers, and enhancing our national and international research profile.

RG4: Modeling and Planning Systems | Teresa Santos

RG4's main objective is to produce and disseminate critical knowledge about modeling and planning systems. After 2025, this group will be reconfigured, following the realignment of the RGs already approved by CICS.NOVA's Scientific Council. Thus, 2024 will be a transition year to the new RG4 – Sustainability and Socio-Ecological Systems.

RG4 will be a research group dedicated to exploring sustainability in its many dimensions, in alignment with UN SDGs 2, 7, 11-15. This RG will focus on the following thematic areas: (a) Carbon neutrality, through mitigation of the heat island effect, implementation of green infrastructure and other measures, (b) Energy transition, through sustainable planning of renewable energy and strategies to reduce consumption, (c) Land use land cover change dynamics, planning and territorial resilience; (d) Agro-ecological transition, (e) Territorial food systems, the value chain (including food waste), public policies and food governance and (f) The management of coastal zones, beaches and protected areas.

The group's strategy is structured around five axes: scientific projects, employment stability, interdisciplinarity, scientific and social impact, training and education. Below is a dynamization proposal according to each axe.

Foster scientific projects

To improve the participation in scientific projects we will develop partnerships with academic, industry, and government institutions to leverage diverse expertise and resources. Establish regular internal meetings to discuss ongoing projects and explore cross-disciplinary ideas and allocate time for brainstorming sessions focused on new, high-impact research questions, will also be promoted. Participation in training workshops on emerging research tools, techniques, and technologies will be stimulated. Members will be encouraged to publish in high-impact journals and pursue projects that have strong potential for real-world applications.

Promote employment stability

CICS.NOVA will strongly reinforce RG4 team and promote employment stability, via the FCT-tenure, awarding three new permanent contracts (1 assistant professor in Geography and Territorial Planning, 1 assistant researcher in Remote Sensing and GIS and 1 Principal Researcher in Environmental Sustainability and Socio-ecological Systems; all 3 being CICS.NOVA Chairs). RG4 will also recruit at least 2 additional PhD fellowships; and 1 junior and 1 assistant fixed-term positions.

Stimulate Interdisciplinarity

The new RG4 will foster interdisciplinary research to address complex socio-ecological challenges. RG4 will continue to expand the scope of its interdisciplinary collaborations and seek out new opportunities to apply expertise to emerging issues. Collaboration with researchers from a wider range of disciplines will be encouraged to gain diverse perspectives and develop innovative solutions. Additionally, Furthermore, the group will explore new methodologies and approaches that can enhance our interdisciplinary research capabilities. Additionally, throughout regular meetings, the group will have the change to share and discuss original high-impact ideas and methodologies, allowing to explore novel approaches. By embracing these strategies, the group aims to make a significant contribution to the field of socio-ecological research and help shape a more sustainable future.

Enhance Scientific and Social impact

RG4 will provide academic insights on relevant topics and respond to civil society actors' requests using co-creation and participatory approaches. We aim to maintain existing institutional links, seek new partnerships, and explore new research avenues. We will collaborate on joint research projects and knowledge exchange initiatives to leverage diverse expertise and resources.

Activities like workshops, conference organization, and scientific publications will continue. We will actively engage with civil society organizations to foster dialogue and co-create solutions, to develop policy briefs, reports, and other accessible materials that highlight the implications of our research. Our research findings will then be translated into actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners. Through open science practices, such as publishing data and methodologies in open-access repositories, the group's visibility and impact is expected to increase.

We will remain dedicated to addressing the core challenges of CICS.NOVA, particularly in the areas of “climate change” and “science for society”, by supporting the development of innovative solutions and policies that contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.

Strength Training and Education

The Master's and PhD programs in Geography, Climate Change, Sustainable Urbanism, and Human Ecology will remain central to collaborative and interdisciplinary research. Students enrolled in these programs benefit from a curriculum that integrates diverse perspectives and methodologies. They have the opportunity to engage in hands-on research projects, working closely with experienced group members to develop their research skills. Additionally, our programs offer a variety of mentorship opportunities, career counseling, and networking events to support students' professional development.



RG5: Health, Population and Wellbeing | Catarina Delaunay

The main objective of Research Group 5 – Health, Population, and Wellbeing is to understand the problems and dynamics related to the health and well-being of populations, covering the following thematic areas: (a) Health policies, organisations and professions; (b) Population dynamics and ageing; c) Determinants and inequalities in health and well-being; and (d) Mental health.

Given its scope and research areas, RG5 strongly contributes to NOVAhealth Platform strategic goals, having some of its integrated researchers as coordinators of research groups and subgroups (e.g. Ageing, Health Systems and Policies).

RG5 shows a significant publication track record in 2022-23, especially in Scopus and/or WoS-indexed journals, being the current prevalence in Q1 and Q2, with a slight advantage over Q3 and Q4. Despite this, the annual average of indexed publications for these two years (15) is lower than the 2021 figures (19). However, the total amount of publications is quite impressive (105), in addition to the other scientific outputs in terms of disseminating the results of the high-quality research produced by RG5 researchers, such as participation in international scientific events and collaborative research networks. This is even more noteworthy since the group has very few full-time researchers (one CEEC-Ind and two doctoral scholarship holders, besides three project fellowship holders in 2022).

Unfortunately, during these past two years, this research group was not successful either in securing national funding for team projects or in ensuring individual grants (including doctoral fellowships). This scenario is even more serious since all three R&D projects have ended in 2022 and the CEEC-Ind project will end mid-2025. Even the only ongoing EU-funded project will now be integrated into RG1 after the RGs were realigned. Subsequently to this realignment of the RGs, RG5 was also strongly reduced from 18 to 8 integrated researchers.

Currently, the group continues to present low levels of knowledge transfer and co-creation partnerships with civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, besides an unsatisfying capacity to attract Ph.D. candidates, showing a very low number compared to other RGs.

In view of the abovementioned scenario and keeping in mind the need to meet the most valued indicators both by the scientific community and by funding bodies, there is a set of measures to be developed and implemented. A summary of the RG5 four major strategic goals for 2024 is set out below, complemented by a brief description of some of the implementation actions to attain positive and impactful scientific outcomes:

1. Attracting and retaining new researchers in the RG by supporting their integration into stable scientific careers

- To increase the critical mass, better contribute to accomplishing CICS.NOVA goals and balance the size against the other research groups, RG5 will reinforce its team in 2025 and beyond. Several measures were already initiated, including integrating three junior researcher positions into current and past project applications for national and international funding. In addition, CICS.NOVA plans to enhance RG5 activities and outputs by recruiting at least two junior and two assistant fixed-term researchers, and, via the FCT-tenure Programme, one Assistant Professor in Sociological Theories and Social Sciences Methodologies; CICS.NOVA Chair; and one Adjunct Professor in Sociology/Social work CICS.NOVA IPLeiria). These abovementioned measures will contribute to recruiting and integrating full-time researchers and/or professors into scientific careers while articulating research with advanced training, namely teaching and mentoring, the next RG5's strategic goal.

2. Consolidating the integration of RG5's research and advanced training activities by leveraging—and significantly contributing to—the Skills4Science Initiative (targeting graduate students and early career researchers), which is to be implemented within CICS.NOVA

- This articulation is primarily facilitated by the active involvement of RG5 researchers in NOVA FCSH's Sociology and Human Ecology master's programs, the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master of Excellence "Transition, Innovation, and Sustainability Environments (TISE)," and the Open Soc PhD Programme, of which CICS.NOVA is a partner organisation. However, other measures and initiatives need to be put into practice.

- **Increase the number of master's and doctoral students affiliated with RG5**

- Engaging undergraduate and master's students in RG5 topics and approaches to attract future Ph.D. candidates. This will include encouraging RG5 researchers to participate in CICS.NOVA Open Days and contribute to teaching, and mentoring, namely by offering curricular internships, scientific initiation grants (e.g., FCT's "Programa Verão com Ciência"), and free curricular units that integrate students into RG5's projects (securing more project funding is thus essential for this effort).

- Maintaining close communication with the OpenSoc and the TISE – Erasmus Mundus Program Coordinators to recommend RG5 researchers as tutors/supervisors for master and doctoral students, based on the latter's interests.

- **Promote the integration and support of master's and Ph.D. students**

- Organizing quarterly workshops where master's and Ph.D. students can present/discuss their research projects and receive feedback from senior researchers.

- Boosting master and Ph.D. students' scientific autonomy by involving them in organizing seminars on themes related to their research interests, with participation from internationally recognized scholars (e.g., the Be My Guest cycle).

- Encouraging Ph.D. students to apply for doctoral scholarships and short-term visits to international academic institutions, to promote their integration into international networks and increase their ability to successfully and timely finish their theses.

- Encouraging Ph.D. students to apply to—or vote for the election of—the RG5 representative position in the graduate students' committee, to contribute to propose measures that foster their research conditions.

- Promoting Ph.D. students' participation in scientific conferences (e.g. APS Congress, CICS.NOVA Annual Forum), CICS.NOVA Summer School, short-term training courses (e.g., scientific writing, qualitative and quantitative data analysis software, research ethics), as well as other relevant workshops (e.g., FCT doctoral grant applications, open access policy, data management practices).

3. Enhancing the quality and scientific impact of RG5 research while adhering to Open Science best practices for publishing and data management

- **Boost research projects funded by national and international programs**

a) Promote applications to individual and R&D project calls (FCT, La Caixa Foundation, Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, AXA Research, and others) with CICS.NOVA as a proponent or host institution

- Informing researchers about open calls and deadlines; organizing sessions to share experiences between members with funded projects and those submitting new proposals; encouraging participation in CICS.NOVA's and NOVA FCSH/Hubs training sessions for project applications.

- Fostering collaborative partnerships with other research groups, including across regional hubs, to strengthen scientific teams and promote multipolarity and interdisciplinarity, both core aspects of CICS.NOVA's identity.

b) Promote project applications or supervision of individual applications (e.g., RIA - Research and Innovation Actions, ERC Grants, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions) to European calls under Horizon Europe

- Sharing information on specific calls and work programs within the group's thematic areas (e.g., Cluster Health of Horizon Europe).

- Attracting foreign postdoctoral fellows by encouraging RG5 members to join the CICS.NOVA supervisors' database for potential MSCA-IP candidates.

- **Foster RG5's internationalization**

- Encouraging members to participate in international scientific meetings and research networks (e.g., ESA, ISA, COST Actions, CYTED Program).

- Reinforcing the policy of hosting visiting foreign researchers and professors to foster academic partnerships.

- **Increase the number of publications in Q1 and Q2 journals, making them a prevalent goal**



- Disseminating international calls from high-impact journals within RG5's thematic areas and research lines.

- Organizing meetings to discuss and share information about prestigious journals within the RG's scope to target for article submission.

- Stimulating joint writing partnerships with foreign colleagues through established or new research networks to foster co-authored scientific outputs.

- **Comply with Open Science**

- Encouraging compliance with open access policies, and good data management practices in research projects, in line with FCT and international funding agencies requirements.

- Disseminating workshops and training courses on creating data management plans and depositing data in reliable open access repositories, such as Zenodo.

- **Increase internal communication and dissemination of RG5 research**

- Providing personalized communication to group members based on their research themes and interests, beyond CICS.NOVA's regular communication channels.

- Encouraging participation in CICS.NOVA's regular initiatives (e.g., Permanent Research Seminar, CICS.NOVA Annual Forum, etc.).

- Promoting RG5 members' involvement in the NOVAhealth Platform, particularly the Working Groups on Ageing, and Health Systems and Policies, respectively to strengthen social sciences contributions to ongoing research.

4. Increasing the social and policy impact of RG5 research, particularly through knowledge transfer, co-creation, and outreach activities.

- ***Align RG5 research with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and CICS.NOVA Key Societal Challenges***

- Alerting researchers about the imperative of aligning their research activities and outputs with UN SDGs, namely 3, 5, and 10, and specifically addressing the “Generations and Demographic Transition” societal challenge identified by CICS.NOVA.

- Leveraging researchers’ skills, expertise, and resources that can be mobilised to reflect on—and address—CICS.NOVA challenge on “Science for Society”.

- Discussing the potential contribution of RG5 research to address the other two key societal challenges, namely Climate Change (e.g., climate-related health impacts, mental health impacts of extreme weather events and displacement due to climate-induced migration, the One Health approach, etc.), and Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence (e.g. e-Health, AI-driven diagnostics, telemedicine, Digital Health Literacy, Big Data analytics, Ethics regulation of AI in healthcare and data protection issues, etc.).

- ***Enhance RG5’s contribution to knowledge co-creation and transfer, and the Knowledge4Policy strategy***

- Stimulating connections between RG5 researchers and decision-makers, businesses, and/or civil society stakeholders, and encouraging collaborative projects and institutional partnerships.

- Mobilizing scientific evidence from RG5 research to inform policymaking, interventions, and services for community needs, while prioritizing academic outputs such as scientific publications.

- Encouraging RG5 members’ applications to calls for knowledge transfer and co-creation activities in articulation with the FCSH Innovation and Value Creation office;

- Fostering RG5 members’ participation in the seminar “Talking about Social Sciences”.

- Promoting the dissemination of RG5’s academic work to stakeholders and the general public through other outreach activities and initiatives aimed at non-specialized audiences.

RG6: Education, Knowledge and Culture | Liliana Pascueiro

RG6 is an interdisciplinary research group focusing on Education, Knowledge, and Culture. It draws from the field of sociology—particularly the sociology of education, with extensions into the sociology and history of knowledge and science—as well as from educational sciences, which include pedagogy, curriculum studies, and educational policy, among others.

The group has maintained stable scientific production in the main productivity indicators, even increasing the number of articles indexed in Scopus, Web of Science in Q1 and Q2 in 2023. However, the group's weak point remains the advanced training indicator: the number of completed theses remains low.

The research group's topics could greatly benefit from the interdisciplinary nature of the Centre, but such benefits continue to be limited to specific initiatives. Activities like the Permanent Research Seminar, Social Sciences Talks, and social media have facilitated researchers' engagement and highlighted commonalities among projects.

In 2024, RG6 will continue to develop a set of actions to fulfil the objectives outlined above:

RG6 | SO1. Strengthening the identity and interdisciplinarity of the RG

Action 1. Continue to promote the sharing of knowledge, areas of interest and projects outputs, in order to stimulate the partnership

RG6 | SO2. Strengthen science impact: increase, diversify and improve the scientific production of the RG and promote its dissemination

Action 2. Disseminate and promote follow-up calls for individual and group projects in order to increase full-time researchers and promote the publication of RG project's products.

Action 3. Encouraging individual applications for doctoral grants among RG6 doctoral candidates, stimulating scientific production from an early stage.

Action 4. Encourage and promote joint thematic issues led by RG6 and/or CICS.NOVA in relevant scientific journals.

RG6 | SO3. Increasing the relationship between research and education

Action 5. Increase the number of PhD grants by continuing to promote support sessions to the application to FCT individual PhD scholarships, at CICS.NOVA level and promoting sessions for monitoring candidatures.

Action 6. Increase the number of students (1st and 2nd degree) in RG6 projects, targeting and diversifying the channels for promoting the offers (open days, social networks...).

Action 7. Increase the number of PhD thesis, when possible, in RG6 pertinent projects, increasing and diversifying the channels for the publication of active projects in CICS.NOVA.

Action 8. Involve PhD and master students in relevant publications and encourage them to publish or to organize academic events on their own (with proper assistance, and without any detriment to their PhD activities and official supervision).





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