

## JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT

# RIO Country Report 2017: Portugal

*Research and Innovation  
Observatory country  
report series*

Corado Simões, V.

Mira Godinho, M.

Sanchez-Martinez, M.

2018



## Summary

Despite the recent improvement in the macroeconomic outlook for Portugal, in 2017 it was considered that *"Portugal has made limited progress on addressing the 2016 country-specific recommendations"* (European Commission, 2017c). In the field of research and innovation, there is explicit mention to the fact that *"Information and communication technologies are lagging behind and the cooperation between business and academia is not strong enough. This is having a negative impact on the innovation capacity of the Portuguese economy"*.

### Challenges for R&I policy-making in Portugal

1. **Improving firms' innovation performance by strengthening their technological and managerial capabilities:** despite positive developments, innovation performance remains relatively weak. There are signs of insufficient in-house capabilities within firms.
2. **Stimulating the emergence of new companies in knowledge-intensive activities:** even though in 2016 medium and high-tech exports reversed the previous downward trend, growth in knowledge-intensive service exports is still tepid. Efforts to stimulate entrepreneurship led to positive results, but difficulties in attracting knowledge-intensive FDI persist.
3. **Ensuring stronger linkages between science and industry:** tackling this challenge requires sustained action from both ends. The challenge here is not just 'technology transfer', but rather the development of co-design and co-action initiatives involving players from both sides.
4. **Defining jointly developed agendas on innovation policy:** this challenge is closely related to the previous one. Measures taken to involve the business sector in R&I policy design risk remaining limited. Further efforts to stimulate real 'bottom-up' initiatives for the definition of R&I agendas are still needed.
5. **Fostering the recruitment of researchers by business firms:** Portugal has one of the lowest shares of researchers employed by businesses in the EU. Promoting employment of high-skilled workers, especially PhD holders, would enable human capital to be put to productive use. This would in turn contribute to address some of the previous challenges.

### Main R&I developments in 2017

- **The [INTERFACE Programme](#)** (former CITec Capacitar programme), aimed at promoting cooperation between universities/research centres and industry.
- **The [Programme to Stimulate Scientific Employment](#)**, aimed at reducing the number of PhD graduates in non-permanent positions.
- **The [second edition of the Lisbon Web Summit](#)**.
- **The [revision of the Capitalizar Programme](#)**, aimed at improving companies' balance sheets and financing conditions.
- **The launch of [R&I Agendas](#)**.
- **The launch of [INCoDe.2030](#)**, the National Initiative for Digital Competencies.
- **The [Strategy for the Public Administration's Digital Transformation](#)**.
- **[Portugal Space 2030](#)**: A Strategy for Research, Innovation and Growth.
- **The [Industry 4.0 Programme](#)**: announced in 2016 and launched in January 2017, it is aimed at enhancing Portuguese firms' awareness and responsiveness to digitalisation.

## **Smart specialisation**

Information on progress in the implementation of RIS3 remains limited. However, all regions have already published their priorities and seem to be well placed to fully implement the process.

One of the main issues is the limited level of implementation of the entrepreneurial discovery process. ANI is expected to relaunch this process soon. ANI also intends to develop initiatives towards the revision of national and regional RIS3 strategies. Another line of action for the near future concerns exploratory work on complementarities between national and regional smart specialisation strategies.

Information on applications is already available for the Alentejo and Centro regions. For both regions, the extent to which applications were aligned with the RIS3 criterion has played an important role in project selection.

### ***New policy developments***

At the national level, the draft report on the assessment of the implementation of RIS3 was presented to the meeting of the Council of the Coordinating Board of the National Strategy for Smart Specialisation in October 2017. It was decided to revise the report to include information from OPs other than Compete 2020. The revised report is expected to be available still in 2017. At the regional level, the Centro Region Coordination Commission (CCDR Centro) decided in November 2016 to launch a public consultation on RIS3.

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