Towards an STI policy framework and a National Digital Repository in Timor-Leste

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Brussels, 29 June 2022, OACPS: Arising from a six-month mission, a Policy Recommendation Report has been developed by high-level international experts to assist Timor-Leste in setting up an efficient Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy framework and a national digital repository.

Requested by the National Institute for Science and Technology (Instituto Nacional de Ciência e Tecnologia -INCT), and carried out between October 2021 and May 2022 in the framework of the R&I Policy Support Facility (PSF) [1] of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), this Policy Recommendation Report (PRR) will contribute to accelerating the country's transition to an innovation-led and knowledge-based economy.

The report includes two feasibility studies, elaborated by a Panel of four high-level experts [2], based on comprehensive desktop research, completed by a series of interviews conducted by the international experts with key national stakeholders (over 30 institutions were engaged), in close collaboration with the national team and the PSF team.)

Some of the main highlights from this final report include:

- The **development of a specific STI policy framework**: selection of four pillars to build on (1) STI policy actions and programme formulation; 2) National Digital Repository, 3) e-Infrastructure/cloud supported by the National Digital Repository, and 4) Science Physical Infrastructure). The framework also includes guidance on how to enhance the cooperation between government, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), industry and civil society, notably by creating partnerships as a priority theme, and embedding Open Science throughout the STI policy actions.
- The **setting up of a national digital repository** (NDR), aimed at stimulating the absorption of national and international knowledge within Timor Leste; a description of how to manage and access digital-based scientific research results – from national research institutions- and connect to other international digital repositories, and a recommendation to follow a 'minimal viable product' approach that starts with limited functionalities, but is scalable in both content, functionality and number of users.

For both the STI policy framework and the NDR, the PSF Expert Panel highly recommended continuity of actions, referring to annual budgeting, but also investing in human resources, setting up communities and networks, and establishing an evidence-based monitoring system.

INCT has already included the installment of the National Depository Digital software in 2023 in its budget plan, submitted to the Council of Ministries and the National Parliamentary for approval.

The importance of international cooperation was also taken into account, and a regional workshop on Open Science in the Pacific was recently co-organised (27 June 2022) by the OACPS Research and Innovation Programme, together with the INCT, the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Community (SPC), thus enabling the country to further expand its network of cooperation with other national, regional and international stakeholders and organisations.

Timor-Leste [3] is the fourth country, after Lesotho [4], Mauritania [5], and The Gambia [6]to benefit from the innovative PSF mechanism, launched in January 2021 by the OACPS Research and Innovation Programme [1], and funded by the European Union, to unlock innovation potential in the 79 OACPS member countries.

To learn more about the two feasibility studies for the development of an STI policy framework and the setting up of national digital repository (as a critical element in the STI framework) see the download link immediately below.

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