

Evaluation Results

Project: PTDC/CS-GEO/122566/2010

Title: Geografia do Estado de Saúde - Uma aplicação do Índice de Saúde da População nos últimos 20 anos (GeoHealthS)

FCT's decision (*Artigo 11º* do Regulamento)

Recommended for Funding - Total Funding: € 100.932,00

Evaluation Panel Statement and Rating

Criterion A - Scientific merit and innovative nature of the project from an international standpoint, including but not limited to: i) Relevance and originality of the project proposed (based on the state-of-the art in a determined scientific area and previous work done by the proposing team); ii) Methodology adopted for carrying out the project; iii) Expected results and their contribution to scientific and technological knowledge; iv) Resulting publications and articles; v) Contribution towards promoting and disseminating science and technology; vi) Production of knowledge that can be incorporated into and applied to the business sector.

- **Rating:** Excellent
- **Comments:** The main aim of this project is to evaluate the collective health status of the population of Portugal at a variety of geographical scales through the construction of a Population Health Index (PHI). The proposal is located within a broader international body of literature that highlights the role of social determinants of health, and builds on previous work by team members on population health status in Portugal. It highlights in particular the need to study population health at a variety of geographical scales in order to better understand patterns of ill-health or wellness. In this way, the project has to potential to contribute significantly to knowledge of population health within Portugal, and to contribute to broader international debates about the measurement of population health, though it is perhaps most innovative at the national scale. The methodology is very detailed, particularly in relation to the development of a Population Health Index (PHI). It would have been helpful to provide some more information about the scales at which data are/may be available for the various indicators identified in the project (e.g. environment, housing, lifestyle etc). This is hinted at in the description of Task 4, but could be described in more detail. It would also be useful to consider the difficulties that may arise in deciding on the relative weighting of these different factors/indicators, what this might mean in developing the PHI and the implications of an aggregated PHI for policy interventions in health-related areas. However, these are relatively minor issues and do not distract from the overall excellent

scientific merit of this project.

Criterion B - Scientific merit of the research team, including but not limited to: i) scientific productivity of the team (ranging from references to publications and citations in published works as used by the basic and engineering sciences, to performance and artistic work in the arts or monographs and books in the humanities and social sciences); ii) Abilities and skills to adequately execute the proposed project (team configuration, Principal Investigator's qualifications); iii) Ability to involve young researchers in training; iv) Availability of the team and non duplication of objectives in relation to other projects underway; v) The degree of internationalization of the team; vi) Degree of success in previous projects in relation to the Principal Investigator (PI) (in the case of young PIs, this requirement must be assessed based on the potential revealed by the PIs curriculum vitae in the absence of prior concrete accomplishments); vii) Level of commitment of any companies participating in the project (if applicable).

- **Rating:** Very Good

- **Comments:** This is an interdisciplinary research team, including academics at a variety of stages of their research careers as well as health professionals. The level of scientific productivity of the team is appropriate, with high levels of involvement in research projects (both ongoing and completed), good supervisory experience, appropriate levels of publications and presentations (some in high impact international journals and conferences) and good levels of internationalization. The research team has the skills and abilities to successfully design, implement and complete this research project. One of the key strengths of the project is the involvement of a variety of Health and Environment agencies. It would be helpful to provide more information about the specific nature of their involvement in the project. While the project includes young researchers, more information about their integration into the project and the types of training that will be made available would strengthen the proposal. The role of the ten consultants should also be specified in more detail and CVs must be provided for all of them.

Criterion C - Feasibility of the plan of work and reasonableness of the budget, including but not limited to: i) organization of the project in terms of the proposed objectives and resources (duration, equipment, size of the team, institutional and management resources); ii) institutional resources of the participating entities, in particular of the Principal Contractor (PC) (technical-scientific, organizational and managerial and, when appropriate, co-funding capacity on the part of companies).

- **Rating:** Excellent

- **Comments:** This is a very well designed project, with a clearly defined methodology and a comprehensive list of tasks and milestones. It builds on previous work by team members, involves the expertise of relevant government departments, and displays a keen and detailed awareness of the work required to build a Population Health Index. The proposal provides a clear indication as to the roles and responsibilities of team members. However, it would be useful to provide more

information on the role of the consultants, as well as of the Health and Environment Agencies, in the project. Details of the institutional resources of the Principal Contractor, and of how the PC will contribute to project management, would also be useful. However, some aspects of the budget (specifically consultants and services) require further justification.

Criterion D - Contribution to the body of knowledge in this field and improvement of competence of the scientific community in general, including but not limited to: i) Contribution to the body of knowledge and competence of the National Science and Technology System (expected effects and results).

- **Rating:** Excellent
- **Comments:** This project has the potential to contribute to knowledge of health status in Portugal over a range of spatial and temporal scales. The first is through the development of a Population Health Index that will provide an overview of population health, how it differs over space and time and evidence to better inform public health policy. The second is by contributing to a broader international debate about measuring and quantifying public health/illness. Dissemination strategies are wide-ranging and will ensure that the results of the project will reach a wide audience of stakeholders. However, it would be useful to provide more specific information on how this project will contribute to scientific knowledge at the international scale. For example, it self evident that the project will be of general interest and in this context it would be helpful if the applicants could indicate which international journals or conferences they will targetting. It would also be helpful to show how the project will lead to the outputs specified in relation to Masters, PhDs and Postdoctoral projects, and to provide more information on how junior researchers will be exposed to training to develop research skills through their involvement in this project.

Overall Rating: Excellent

Overall Comments: This is an excellent project that is firmly located within a broader international literature on population health. It identifies a significant gap in knowledge about population health within Portugal and offers a coherent means of addressing this. The project research team has the skills, abilities and experience to successfully complete this project, and has the potential to help develop the skills and abilities of junior researchers. The level of involvement of health and environment authorities is one of the major strengths of this project. The plan of work and methodology is comprehensive, appropriate and feasible, though could identify potential difficulties that may arise and strategies for dealing with them. While dissemination strategies are wide-ranging, more information on how the project might contribute to knowledge at the international scale would be useful. It is clear that team members have the ability to make this contribution, so information on target journals/conferences should be included. More information on the role of consultants in this project should also have been provided.

Panel Recommended Funding [1]: € 100.932,00

[1] According to budget availability, the total funding recommended by FCT might be different from the one recommended by the panel.

Comments: The panel recommends a reduction in the budget of €95,921, comprised as follows:

1. A reduction in the cost of human resources of €26,396 (one BI should be hired for 36 months, and one BI hired for 12 months)
2. A reduction in the cost of consultants of €20,000 (the proposal does not provide sufficient information about the role of the consultants)
3. A reduction in the cost of services of €32,038 (including bibliography of €4,000; webpage costs of €7,600 + €18,938; and office materials of €1,500)
4. A reduction in the cost of patents of €1,500
5. A reduction in the cost of overheads, calculated at 20%, of €15,987

Panel Recommended Funding for Human Resources: € 52.793,00

Comments: This should be applied to one BI fellowship for 36 months and one BI fellowship for 12 months.

Position of the PI relative to FCT's decision and panel evaluation (to be completed by 19-09-2011)