Referência da candidatura: LA/P/0083/2020

Designação: LARSyS - Laboratório de Robótica e Sistemas de Engenharia

Acrónimo: LARSyS

Coordenador do LA: José Alberto Rosado Santos Victor

Nº Investigadores Doutorados Integrados: 124

Instituição de Gestão Principal: Associação do Instituto Superior Técnico para a Investigação e o Desenvolvimento

Instituição Proponente: Laboratório de Robótica e Sistemas de Engenharia (LARSyS)

Outras Unidades de I&D: -

CRITERION A

Technological capacity to sustainably support and promote the response of public policies

Rating: 5

Comments:

n all the three aspects referred to in the evaluation guide (Relevance, scope and impact of the support to public policies in the last 5 years, relevance and scope of the proposed thematic lines and adequacy of the governance model to secure effective support to public policies) LARSyS deserves an excellent appraisal. Indeed, it has translated a scientific excellence in various domains into a set of 5 thematic lines that are very well aligned with essential aspects of public policies. These thematic lines have very suggestive designations: Oceans, Urban, Air, Life and Interaction. The first two have important economic and environmental objectives, the third focus on space and aeronautics that have been defined as an important objective, by the government, the fourth merges engineering and health and the fifth on the interaction between robots and their acting environment, both physical and human.

The previous examples of LARSyS action in relevant areas of public policy show that there is a clear focus of the Associate Lab in contributing to the solution of issues raised by societal problems. They have been able to identify examples that are aligned with the thematic lines proposed reinforcing both their previous actions and future plans. LARSyS is also effectively engaged in enhancing and supporting research infrastructure in Portugal. Finally, LARSyS governance, the model of which is essentially to be continued, has demonstrated to be able to assure the convergence of competences in several technical and scientific disciplines to face and search for a solution to complex problems.
CRITERION B
Promotion of scientific or technical careers at doctoral level & Attraction of Talent

Rating: 5

Comments:
It is clear that LARSyS has been able to attract highly talented researchers, both in Portugal and abroad, as well as to create a fruitful environment where this talent has developed. As a demonstration, 27 of LARSyS researchers have won permanent positions in higher education institutions. However, as a drawback, LARSyS has been having some difficulties in retaining talented researchers, which is an aspect that requires attention. The HR strategy seems to be strongly linked with IST growth projections which is an assurance for stability, but LARSyS should have its own research career with tenure-track positions. LARSyS track record in contracts and both national and international projects are a guarantee for sustainability. The proposal indicates in quite a detailed description, the timing and function of each of the researchers to be hired, which is very well aligned with the needs of each thematic line. Simultaneously, LARSyS has been the host institution for a large number of PhD students, both from Portugal and abroad. The scheme for career development is also very well described and robust, assuring each researcher a clear path for progress. All the procedures for the recruitment and promotion, explained in detail in the proposal, are adequate, making the overall process transparent and aiming at hiring the best possible candidates.

CRITERION C
International projection & Securing diversified funding

Rating: 5

Comments:
In the period 2015-2019 LARSyS has assured about 30% of its budget from EC projects and estimates almost the same for the next 5 years, which is quite plausible. Moreover, LARSyS has been very successful in raising competitive money in FCT and other public entities project calls (together, also about 30%) which demonstrates both the capabilities and seniority of its researchers and the scientific quality of their proposals. Something that should also be stressed is the number of spin-offs generated on the basis of the work done by researchers at LARSyS that, beyond being a very positive contribution to the diversification and technical quality or Portuguese economy, but also shows the good entrepreneurial environment created in the institution. This is also a positive aspect of LARSyS leadership and governance.

Overall
Rating: 100

Recommended annual funding: 1 064 861,06 €
Comments:

According to the comments above, the Panel recommends the award of the title of Laboratório Associado for the period of ten years. The Panel recommends complementary funding, as annual average for the period 2021-2025, of 1,064,861.06.