

To the Minister of Science and Technology  
and to the workers of ITN

The Directive Board



## Foreword by the Coordinating Committee of the Scientific Council

The year 1999 witnessed the publication of two important laws for scientific research in Portugal: government decrees D.L. 124/99, April 20, redefining the statute of the career of scientific researchers, and D.L. 125/99, April 20, establishing principles and a framework of rules concerning the general organisation and operation of public research institutions.

These two laws formally created the scientific council, formed by all the researchers of a research institution. Quoting the preamble of D.L. 124/99:

“The scientific council, considered as the chief organ of debate and coordination of the scientific activities of each institution, is elevated to the category of cornerstone of the entire structure of scientific and technological research and development, (...)”.

On June 2, 1999, a plenary meeting of the researchers of ITN formally founded the scientific council of the Institute and approved its statute following which, on June 30, 1999, a Coordinating Committee of 5 members, was elected. As laid out in the statute, the first name in the list of members of the elected committee became that of the Chair of the Scientific Council.

This new Scientific Council and its Coordinating Committee profited from the experience of a Provisional Scientific Council and Committee that functioned during 1998 and the first half of 1999.

During the second half of 1999, the Scientific Council and its Coordinating Committee, have contributed to different issues of importance to ITN, namely, a draft proposal of the statute to govern the Institute; the definition of a mission and of strategic goals for ITN; the identification of the fields in which R&D activities take place *intra muros*; a compilation of the rules governing the recruitment and progression in the scientific career of research personnel; and, finally, a set of recommendations concerning the preparation and format of the annual reports of ITN, and the terms of reference for the evaluators that periodically assess the performance of the Institute. The Committee also coordinated the Institute's contribution to activities programmed during the Week that is annually organised in the country by the initiative of the Ministry of S&T with the purpose of fostering scientific culture especially among the young generation.

These and other actions were accomplished in a spirit of collaboration with the Directive Board of ITN, although in several cases they were actually the responsibility of the Directive Board and not of the Scientific Council.

This Committee and the Scientific Council hope that the year 2000 will bring significant advances in the organisation and development of ITN, particularly those that will be the consequence of the approval and publication by the government of the statute of ITN, and of a clear definition of the mission and of strategic goals of the Institute as a public R&D institution. It is however to fear that in the year 2000, financial constraints affecting research institutions, and specifically ITN, may obstruct the elaboration of a short and medium term plan and the desirable expansion of the research activities of the Institute. In this context it is important to point out that funding limited to that obtained through the submission of research projects proposals to financing agencies is clearly not adequate to guarantee the proper operation of a National Laboratory. Unfortunately the present policy goes in the direction of a systematic suppression of institutional funding except of current expenses, mainly, personnel.

The Coordinating Committee of the Scientific Council

