

FOREWORD

Contrary to hopes and expectations expressed one year ago (see Foreword of the 1999 Report), the year 2000 did not see the implementation of the new statute of ITN referred in the legislation published in 1999 nor a definition of the mission and strategic goals of the Institute. The documents drafted by the Scientific Council as a contribution to the final elaboration of the new statute and mission statement were sent early last year to the Minister of Science and Technology but no reaction has been apparent.

Once a mission statement is adopted for the Institute, a frame of reference will be available to direct the programming and organisation of its activities and support the drawing up of a medium term plan, which, rather than a plan of activities, should be a plan for the development of the scientific and technological potential of ITN. However, no development plan will be viable without the political engagement to ensure the indispensable allocation of resources. In this respect it is important to note that the Institute's potential cannot be developed by relying only on financing obtained from open competition. On the other hand the absence of a mission statement can negatively influence the approval by the Government of an adequate budget to support the Institute's activities.

Between 1999 and 2000, the Institute's budget that is chronically grossly inadequate, even had a slight negative growth if one takes into consideration the integration of the budget of the DRPNS¹ that was formerly part of the Directorate-General of the Environment.

There is need of capital investment for developing existent laboratories and creating new ones and also for refurbishing facilities and buildings. In August 1999 this Committee has issued a review of investment projects proposed by different research teams and has estimated that in a timespan of 5 years an amount of approximately 15 million Euros (3 billion PTE) would be required². In May 2000 the Co-ordinating Committee has decided to promote the elaboration of investment project proposals of a such a nature as to be in

consonance with the objectives of the special financing programme of the Ministry of Science and Technology directed towards the restructuring of public R&D institutions³. The proposals which are now beginning to arrive will, after a period of open discussion in the Scientific Council, be submitted to the approval of the Directive Board for possible inclusion in the special programme.

The internal organisation of ITN has experienced no modification during 2000. In our view an important measure would be the implementation of departments with adequate autonomy. Heads of Department, would be responsible for scientific management, co-ordination of activities and management of the Department's budget and of other departmental resources.

The career situation of the scientific staff remained stagnant with no progress for researchers that have been in their present position for 10 and more years irrespectively of the scientific quality or relevance to the institution of their professional performances. No new tenured positions for scientific staff were opened although there is an urgent need for new staff in several different sectors. Near the end of 2000, an opportunity for researchers to compete for the post of Principal Investigator has at last been offered by the Directive Board, but only in two of the five scientific areas of ITN. The corresponding procedure is currently under way.

Finally it is important to note that it is our understanding that the scientific staff and the technicians of ITN deserve to be commended on the extent and quality of the work performed during the past year notwithstanding the many difficulties. In the Sacavém campus continues a tradition of excellence among the national scientific and technical infrastructures that has primarily to do with the quality and motivation of its scientific staff.

15 January 2001

The Scientific Council Co-ordinating Committee

¹ Dept. of Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety

² to meet this goal the average annual value of the capital investment calculated for the last 5 years (1996-2000) would have to be multiplied by a factor of 4 to 5

³ "Programa de Apoio à Reforma dos Laboratórios do Estado"