

CITAB Advisory Committee

Summary Report on the Activities of CITAB 2012

Introduction

The Advisory Committee last visited CITAB in Sept 2012. Five key areas for improvement were noted which included: -

1. Improving international visibility within CITAB's 3 main groups
2. Working towards a greater scientific coherence within the groups
3. Increasing scientific productivity through an increase in peer-reviewed publications
4. Increasing collaboration with stakeholders; and
5. Increasing human resources to obtain a critical mass in all areas.

This Activities Report covers both activities reviewed by the Advisory Committee (AC) and work from Sept until Dec 2012.

It is clear that CITAB is extremely anxious to follow up on all of the AC's recommendations. Each one of these issues is considered within the body of the text. The AC recognized that within the context of the current economic situation, it was difficult to obtain the extra resources that any improvements require.

Within this important constraint CITAB is making every effort to achieve greater success.

1. There have been efforts to form alliances with links with China, Brazil, the USA and Spain. Some Groups have been more successful than others.
2. The BE Group is working closely with the other groups but there still are activities that do not gel with overall objectives of the SAC and EI groups.
3. There is some variation within the Groups in the publication rate but the data do not enable an analysis of whether this is increasing in terms of publication in peer-reviewed journals.
4. There is a real effort to improve contact with local industries, educational establishments within the local region and local government.
5. There has been a sustained effort to interact with other relevant groups in Northern Portugal to ensure that collaborative efforts maximize skills and ensure a critical mass of investment in key areas of expertise.

A review of each Group's outputs follows.

Sustainable agro-food Chains (SAC) Group

In 2012 the Group was able to sustain its income from FCT grants in spite of increased competition and a significant pressure on state funding. It achieved a large increase in funding from other national resources.

The achievements of the Group overall are of great relevance to ensuring the sustainability of the Portuguese environment. The phytochemical group needs to ensure that its outputs are exploited more.

The Group has a good track record in international actions and collaborative projects and has participated in 3 funded international projects.

The Group has achieved a total of 52 publications in peer-reviewed journals over this period from the group consisting of 61 research workers.

Overall the Group has made excellent progress.

Biosystems Engineering (BE) Group

As recommended by the Advisory Committee the BE group has focused their manpower resources into two main project areas. Compared with the other two project groups this is a small group.

Their interaction with the other research groups could have been made more explicit given the fact that many of the skills in this group have relevance to the work of other groups in CITAB.

The “Wood Mechanical & Quality Evaluation” group has reported no significant achievements.

Achievements in the “Image-based Systems” group are notable for a patent application but it appears that the main achievements reported have not yet resulted in a direct interest by sponsors (government or industry).

Excellent progress in international collaboration has been achieved with 2 funded projects. International students have not been recruited.

23 publications have appeared in peer-reviewed journals from a group consisting of 34 active research workers.

Progress in the Group is good.

Eco-Integrity (EI) Group

Whilst there has been a drop in income from FCT and other national funding agencies compared with 2010, the Group still maintained a very reasonable level of funding compared with 2011 considering the economic situation in Portugal. In addition there is still a high level of funding from local industry, which is a considerable achievement.

The EI is not involved in any international project as either co-ordinator or participant.

The Group has achieved 49 publications in peer-reviewed journals from a total of 47 research workers equivalent to the output on a man year basis to the SAC Group.

Interactions with stakeholders have been active and very effective.

Relatively few higher degrees were completed given the overall size of the group.

Progress in the Group has been excellent.

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