Pioneering initiative in Portugal rewards promising research projects focused on solving challenges within the society

Oeiras, 20 maio 2022 – In total, 14 applications were submitted in the 1st edition of the InnOValley Proof of Concept Fund (IOV PoC), and 4 were distinguished as the most innovative scientific projects: one at IGC and 3 at ITQB NOVA. Each one receives around €50k in funding and over the next 12 months the projects researchers from the Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência (IGC) and the Instituto de Tecnologia Química e Biológica António Xavier (ITQB NOVA), will confirm preliminary data and develop proposals that will solve challenges present in society.

Following the successful trend of the best and most experienced technology transfer and innovation offices in the world, the InnOValley Proof of Concept Fund (IOV PoC) places Oeiras at the forefront of innovation, with an annual funding mechanism that aims to bring scientific research closer to society and the market.

The projects evaluation was carried out by a panel of eight members, professionals with decades of international experience in the field of innovation, such as Jane Kinghorn, Director of the Translational Research Office at University College London, with a highly successful past implementing funding mechanisms.

The total fund for the 1st edition is €200,000.00, with a financial contribution of €160,000.00 from the Municipality of Oeiras and €20,000.00 from each of the scientific institutions (IGC and ITQB NOVA). The InnOValley Proof of Concept Fund is an initiative of the InnOValley Innovation Unit, shared between the IGC and ITQB NOVA, a result of a partnership between these scientific institutions and the Municipality of Oeiras, which embraced this project under one of the three pillars of the Strategy for Science and Technology of Oeiras. With this model of shared innovation unit, very common in Europe and the United States of America, but so far non-existent in Portugal, another step is taken to bring science closer to people.

Projects distinguished:

Project name: High-resolution single-molecule imaging via 3D printing **Project lead:** Simão Pedro Pereira Coelho, Post Doc, IGC, Optical cell biology
Team: Pedro Pereira ITQB NOVA; Mario Del Rosario IGC; Jorge Carvalho IGC; Ricardo Henriques IGC

Project name: Development of highly selective nickel complexes for the treatment of *Candida* spp. Infections
Project lead: Ana Petronilho ITQB NOVA, Bioorganometallic Chemistry
Team: Catarina Pimentel ITQB NOVA

Project name: Biofactories for high value natural pigments: the production of carotenoids in plant cell cultures
Project lead: Rita Abranches ITQB NOVA, Plant Cell Biology
Team: Rita Ventura ITQB NOVA; Bárbara Rebelo ITQB NOVA; Peter Kis ITQB NOVA

Project name: From trash to treasure – developing proprietary collagenases for transformation of fish waste into high value products
Project lead: Elin Moe, ITQB NOVA, Macromolecular Crystallography unit
Team: Elin Moe

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