

6th Science & Innovation Day at NOVA

21 November 2023

Dear colleagues and friends,

Welcome to the 6th edition of the **Science and Innovation Day at NOVA!**

Thank you all for being here and for your active participation. Over the years, this event has been attracting an extraordinary interest from the academic community and has now become a **trademark of NOVA's excellence in research and innovation**, providing an opportunity to showcase our most recent projects and to network as well!

There would be no science & innovation without scientists and entrepreneurs, so allow me to give special thanks to our professors, researchers, and other talented professionals from all our schools, for the incredible job they do every day, pushing the frontiers of knowledge and showing that **when it comes to science, there is no limit to what can be achieved**. And at NOVA, we can find many good examples:

- Advancing molecular biology and genetic engineering to support medical breakthroughs and pave the way for **personalized medicine**;
- **Manipulating materials at nanoscale**, that lead to the development of new materials with unique properties which can then be applied in various industries with increased efficiency;
- Crossing computer science, machine learning, and data science to provide **AI-based solutions** that revolutionize several industries by performing tasks that traditionally required humans;
- Collecting evidence to identify **opportunities and threats for the oceans** and support the development of policies towards a blue economy;
- Advances in neuroscience that allow a better understanding on how our **brain processes social information** and its impact on individual decision-making;
- The intersection of technology and humanities – the so-called **digital humanities** – to preserve cultural heritage and explore digital storytelling;
- Researching on the **impact of social media** on the proliferation of fake news, activism, and even mental health.

I could go on but my time here is limited!

All of these examples open up new possibilities for innovation and **push the boundaries of what we know about the world**. Due to the complexity they entail, they all have one thing in common: **interdisciplinarity**.

NOVA's interdisciplinary research & innovation have proven to be a powerful approach for tackling complex problems in an effective way and driving positive societal impact.

The success that we are having is clear:

- in the way we champion research competitive money from **Horizon Europe**: for example, our researchers have secured 32 ERC grants totalling over 42 million euros;
- in our participation in 10 Associated Laboratories (coordinating 3 of them) and 12 Collaborative Laboratories;
- in our involvement in the “Mobilizing Agendas” of the Portuguese Resilience and Recovery Plan (PRR), **where we are among the Portuguese universities involved in the highest number of “Agendas”**;
- and more recently, in the launch of the **NOVA Institute for Medical Systems Biology (NIMSB)**, a new centre of excellence supported by the EU, the Portuguese Government and the Municipality of Oeiras, that aims to apply new biomedical and digital technologies and innovative solutions in the field of healthcare, and which will work with all NOVA institutes and schools.

Speaking of interdisciplinary, today you will have the opportunity to find out more about the recently-created **NOVA Interdisciplinary Research Community on Sustainable Energy Systems**, to promote and accelerate interdisciplinary research in this area through concrete programs and initiatives, with the support of GALP.

Also, the notion of **research impact**, critical to research evaluation, has evolved in the EU from the **traditional research metrics**, (top indexed publications, normalized impact factor, and research competitive funds) to include a **new research and innovation metrics** based on success stories, knowledge transfer, even job creation, and more.

On that note, today we will also announce the winners of the **Research Impact Narratives Challenge**, an initiative aimed at distinguishing success stories with a focus on impact, developed by NOVA academic staff.

We have been putting a lot of effort in developing a research & innovation ecosystem that can facilitate the **translation of research into real-world applications**, as shown by the growth of new startups, technology transfer offices, and incubators in recent years.

In that sense, **interdisciplinary research at NOVA has been fuelling innovation** by harnessing the collective expertise of diverse disciplines to tackle complex challenges and drive advancements that benefit society as a whole. In today's world you can't just focus on research or innovation: you need to invest in both to really be able to serve society.

Before I finish, I would like to say that, as most of you know by now, this year we celebrate NOVA's 50th anniversary. **This University has been a driving force for positive change in Portugal over the last 50 years and our commitment is to remain that way for the next 50, even at European level**, together with our strategic partners.

Universities of excellence are **universities driven by research & innovation that can make a difference in society**, locally and globally. NOVA, as a global and civic university committed to the sustainable development of society is ready to take on that challenge and contribute to make the world a better place for the next generations to live in. And you, NOVA researchers and innovators, **play a key role in that mission**.

My last words go to Professor Isabel Rocha, Vice-rector for Research and Innovation, and her team, whom I would like to thank for organizing what I believe will be **another successful edition of the Science & Innovation Day**.

Hope you enjoy!

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