



Towards a Coherent National Policy for Scientific Research – Vision, Priorities, and Governance

Scientific research represents one of the key pillars of the state's policy for socio-economic development within a three-pronged vision of innovative companies, modern and innovative public services, and innovative regions. Leveraging the outputs of scientific research activities can improve the productivity and competitiveness of public and private companies, can create wealth and highly-qualified jobs, and can contribute to the identification of innovative solutions to environmental, resource, security, and societal challenges. Additionally, scientific research can help modernize and improve public services such as the public administration, transportation and health, in addition to creating competitive regions capable of leveraging natural resources and regional comparative advantages in the elaboration and realisation of a coherent vision for regional development, both for internal and coastal regions.

In spite of a significant number of strengths, the national scientific research system continues to suffer from a greater number of obstacles preventing the highly qualified talent active in this sector from achieving their full potential. These include the absence of a coherent vision and clearly defined national priorities resulting in uncoordinated and disparate efforts and inefficiently allocated resources. Moreover, the research evaluation system is in need of a major overhaul. Significant capacity building is required in the management of research units and centres. Human resources are not sufficiently motivated and

inadequately managed. Significant challenges exist in the area of technology transfer where collaborations and partnerships between research laboratories and the surrounding environment remain limited.

Several studies have been conducted in the past few years to evaluate the overall framework and elaborate recommendations. The majority of stakeholders in the research and innovation system seem to agree on areas where improvement and reform actions are needed. Nevertheless, the required reforms continue to await concrete implementation leading to several wasted opportunities.

Taking account of the fact that several ministries have recently completed the elaboration of strategic plans in their respective sectors, and building on the results of the national consultation on higher education reform, it is incumbent upon us to launch an initiative aiming at the integration of the relevant outputs of these actions into a coherent national strategy for scientific research. Integrating the input of the private sector and civil society organisations, this initiative fits in the general framework of the national development plan and is aligned with the strategic orientation of the National Unity Government to base socio-economic development on leveraging new technologies, private enterprise, and scientific research and innovation.

The initiative aims in particular at defining clear priorities for scientific research in the medium term in the various sectors. These priorities should form the future basis of evaluation, funding, and incentive systems in order to unify efforts and resources around national priorities and societal challenges.

The initiative also aims at elaborating concrete proposals for reforming the governance of the scientific research system. In particular, the institutional framework, as well as the areas of research and impact evaluation, programming,

funding, management and incentive systems, as well as the collaboration between research laboratories and the surrounding socio-economic environment require major reforms driven by targeted and effective public policy mechanisms.

In order to provide the best conditions of success for this participatory initiative, our departments will make accessible the various studies conducted in the evaluation of the current systems and programs, and will coordinate with you to adequately benefit from your valuable contributions in the preparation of constructive proposals capable of mobilising a broad base of support.

Looking forward to meeting or hearing from you soon, in the context of this participatory initiative to elaborate a coherent national policy for scientific research, I wish you and our country all the success.

Khalil Amiri

Secretary of State for Scientific Research