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Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Between

THE PORTUGUESE FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (FCT, I.P.)

AND

THE AIR CENTRE ASSOCIATION STEERING COMMITTEE

AND

THE BUE PLANET INITIATIVE (BY GEO)

for mutual recognition, strategic alliance and intention to establish sustainable collaboration projects between participants in both networks.

THE PORTUGUESE FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, I.P., a public body under the supervision of the Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education, with the statutory mission of promoting, following up and evaluating science and technology programs and projects, with headquarter in Av. D Carlos I, n.º 126, 1249 – 074, Lisbon, hereinafter also referred to as the “**FCT**” and hereby represented by its President of the Board of Directors Paulo Ferrão,

THE ATLANTIC INTERNACTIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE, hereinafter also referred to as the “**AIR Centre**” and hereby represented by the Chair of its Executive Committee, António Sarmento, whose creation is being promoted by the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education through FCT,

and

THE GROUP OF EARTH OBSERVATIONS (GEO) INITIATIVE “OCEANS AND SOCIETY: BLUE PLANET” established by the inter-governmental organisation GEO, hereinafter also referred to as the “**GEO Blue Planet**” and hereby represented by the Steering Committee Chair Sophie Seeyave and the Initiative’s Scientific Coordinator Emily Smail.

Separately, FCT, AIR Centre and GEO Blue Planet shall also be referred to herein as “the Party” and jointly as “the Signatories”,

Taking into account the development of the R&D agenda on Atlantic Interactions, as referred in the Resolution of the Council of Ministers 78/2016, 30th November, together with the “Florianopolis Declaration” of November 20th of 2017 and the associated creation of the “Atlantic International Research Centre - AIR Centre” for international collaborative research on Atlantic interactions, integrating space and climate conditions;

Taking into account both AIR Centre and GEO Blue Planet have the objective to play a significant role in the implementation of the Galway Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation and Belém Agreement on Atlantic Research and Innovation Cooperation, and that Portugal and the other expected founding members of the AIR Centre are also members of GEO, under who’s auspices the GEO Blue Planet Initiative is created;

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Taking into account the close relationship of general mission and scope of AIR Centre and GEO Blue Planet, the synergies in the fields of ocean observation data acquisition, integration/processing, management and user engagement, in the context of service to society;

Taking into account the preliminary working meeting between AIR Centre and GEO Blue Planet representatives that took place on January 16th, 2018, following an invitation letter to take up discussions on collaboration from the GEO Blue Planet Co-Chairs to FCT on October 18th, 2017;

Have decided on the following:

Clause 1

The present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aims at establishing a synergetic relationship between AIR Centre and GEO Blue Planet, with the objective to align activities wherever feasible, to optimize each organisation's relevance and value to society by collaboration, enhancing mutual use of resources and minimising potential overlaps or redundancy of actions.

Clause 2

In the context of the present MoU, the Signatories will take, among others, the following actions:

a) Mutual identification of scientific and technological entities, projects and contact points in each network with potential for collaboration and contribution to the objectives in the other Party's objectives. In particular, within GEO Blue Planet, entities and projects of relevance for better understanding of the Atlantic Basin, and/or potential to stimulate entrepreneurship and the development of new services and products in the scientific and technological areas of AIR Centre:

- Space (including space technology and earth observation data)
- Ocean (including sustainable use of ocean resources)
- Climate (focussing on aspects related to climate change)
- Energy
- Data Science

In particular, within AIR Centre, entities and projects of relevance for the three thematic areas of monitoring and prediction of GEO Blue Planet:

- Coastal communities (focussing on sea-level rise and coastal hazards)
- Ecosystem and human health (focusing on marine litter, water-related infections disease and seafood security and sustainability)
- Sustainable economic development (focussing on marine industries and their environmental impacts and maritime safety and security)

b) Mutual encouragement of participation of AIR Centre participants in the 4 GEO Blue Planet working groups:

- Data Discovery, Access and Utilization
- Information Services

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- Users and Networks
 - Developing Capacity and Societal Awareness;
- c) Maximising the data availability from AIR Centre participants to GEO Blue Planet, assuring data quality and format correspond to the standards practised by GEO Blue Planet, in particular through the GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI), and following the practices of the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC);
 - d) Promoting partnerships and joint competitive projects between the participant networks of AIR Centre and GEO Blue Planet for research and development projects within the scientific and technological scope of both organisations;
 - e) Actively pursuing identified collaboration possibilities, in particular the establishment of an “Atlantic Data Cube” via AIR Centre participants (in particular Air_DataNet/CoLab DTx), as part of the Open Data Cube initiative;
 - f) Engaging in organisation of joint workshops and other dissemination and user engagement activities (incl. e.g. Hackathons/Appathons), as well as encouraging mutual representation at dissemination events organized by one of the Signatories;
 - g) Actively planning of ensuring the Signatories presence at mutual events, including the already planned AIR Centre High Level Cape Verde event (May 2018), and the 4th GEO Blue Planet Symposium (July 2018);
 - h) Considering the possibility of an AIR Centre representative being seconded to the GEO secretariat for a period of time, in order to further support the awareness and effectiveness of the AIR Centre and GEO Blue Planet overall objectives;
 - i) Other forms of collaboration that contribute to the mission of AIR Centre and/or GEO Blue Planet.

Clause 3

1. A Joint Commission for monitoring the implementation of the present MoU will be set up by the following representatives of the Signatories:
 - a) For FCT, the Chair of the Directors’ Board or a representative indicated by the Chair;
 - b) For AIR Centre, 2 representatives indicated by the Chair of the Steering Committee;
 - c) For GEO Blue Planet, 2 representatives indicated by the Co-Chairs;
2. The Joint Commission will elaborate a more detailed action plan based on Clause 2, which shall be presented at the AIR Centre workshop in Cape Verde in May 2018, seeking approval of the decision bodies from both Signatories.

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3. Once an action plan is defined and approved, the Joint Commission shall meet at least twice per year, per remote conference or at location to be mutually agreed.

Clause 4

Each Party is responsible for taking necessary action to secure adequate financial and human resources to perform the projects or activities eventually developed in collaboration.

Clause 5

The Signatories will collaborate respecting the principles of reciprocity, mutual benefit and result sharing.

Clause 6

The present MoU can be modified at any time, under mutual written agreement of the Signatories.

Clause 7

The content of this MoU does not generate any obligation in the context of International Public Law.

Clause 8

1. The present MoU shall come into effect on the date of its signature, and will remain in force for a period of five (5) years. Thereafter, it will be renewable for further periods by mutual written consent of the Signatories.
2. The present MoU shall cease to have effect if one of the Signatories expresses this wish, notifying the other in written, and with a time span of 60 days before the cessation.

Signed in Lisbon, on March 20th, 2018, in three originals, in English language.

SIGNED for and on behalf of the
Science and Technology Foundation
FCT, I.P



Paulo Ferrão
Chair of the Board of Directors

SIGNED for and on behalf of
the Steering Committee of the
AIR Centre Association



António Sarmento
Chair of Executive Committee
of the Steering Committee

SIGNED for and on behalf of
the GEO Blue Planet Initiative



Sophie Seeyave
Chair of the Steering Committee



Emily Smail
Scientific Coordinator