1st. Internal Report on CFCUL
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1. Taking a historical perspective

The life of a research centre such as CFCUL goes typically through three different phases:

Phase I. The preliminary levels and first issues: the *constitution* phase.
Phase II. The *development* period: the period in which the Centre expands both in number of researchers and in quantity and scope of projects.
Phase III. The *mature* stage: the Centre has to assess its capacities and strength, and make a decision about the future. It is time to re-define aims and choose the lines that show themselves as more promising.

Our assessment and advice:

CFCUL has done tremendously well in Phases I (slow beginnings, 2003-6) and II (rapid expansion, 2007-8), now it's time to move on to Phase III.

To convert CFCUL from the Quality Research Centre it is now into a Centre of excellence and a reference for the European Philosophy of Science will require readjusting some aspects. The background philosophy, we propose, should undergo a change.
The main lines of this change are the following:
(a) to renounce to the model of "extensive agriculture" (cover as much topics and aspects as possible) in favour of the intensive model (pick good soil and demand high yields).
(b) to abandon the bottom-up model of recruitment (accept everybody around and allow everybody to develop their own interests, projects, lines) and move to a top-down, selective process. This does not necessarily require to exclude people (although sometimes this is necessary) but rather to "force" or "strongly advise" people to join solid, well-defined, on-going projects.

2. Taking into account the national context

CFCUL is the only place in Portugal, and especially in the Lisbon area, where all sorts of people who have an interest in philosophy of science can find resources as much as intellectual, moral and institutional support. It's also the place where students from all departments in the University can get at least some training and advice. Beyond, it's the outcome of a singular historical process, attracting other non-majority groups and individuals beyond philosophy of science strictly construed. Thus CFCUL has an essential function as a nurturing shelter for a number of people and currents. This circumstance is one of its strong points, one that contributes to the identity of the Centre.

3. Combining the two constraints

Being a Research Centre of reference in Europe is, strictly speaking, incompatible with the more general and unconstrained project of being a meeting place for open discussion and free exchange of ideas, a "nurturing shelter" for intellectuals and students.

The sheltering/nurturing aspect has been essential for the development of the Centre and it is now felt as filling a gap in the intellectual and philosophical life of Lisbon and Portugal. The internationally competitive aspect is essential for the survival of the CFCUL.

Our assessment and advice:

We understand the pressure for keeping both aspects, but the success of the CFCUL as a competitive research centre depends on its being capable of maintaining these two aspects clearly distinguished, conceptually and administratively separated and independently advertised. Proper labels and distinct modes of organization should be found for the two types or levels of activity: open space (training, brainstorming, meeting other folks) *versus* cutting-edge research.
Fortunately, the sheltering/nurturing activities are more spontaneous and do not need a rigid strategy. The research centre, on the contrary, requires a clear design that foresees the developing lines for the next years.

4. Managing the resources wisely, i.e. thriftily

It is compulsory to make some hard choices: it is not possible (feasible) to pursue all of projects at once. The generous attitude of accepting everything and everybody has the pernicious effect of impeding the real growth of the promising lines (for lack of time, strength and resources) and the frustration of their leaders and of the people responsible of the CFCUL.

Our assessment and advice:

We suggest three criteria for choosing a research project:

(i) there is someone in the Centre that really wants to do it (as opposed to being merely in a position to do something, or to being somewhat interested, or informed) and is in a position of doing it well (he/she has the competence, intelligence, opportunity, availability, etc.)
(ii) the Center has the resources and competencies to accomplish something good
(iii) the topic provides an opportunity to attract attention in the international landscape .

[Some projects seem particularly unrealistic: Citizenship Observatory, the Laboratory of Scientific Illustration (these projects would demand the resources of the entire group for several years; they cannot be really successful with only partial commitment from the group, next to 15 other large-scale projects). Some questions are naïve: far too general, far too wide, no hope of doing any genuine research with results.]

 To summarize, our recommendations are as follows:

- Do not let 1000 flowers bloom in the "workspace"
- Select a small number of priorities for research; be exclusive rather than inclusive, be your own most severe critics: what are your chances of producing top work, and also of getting participants to do what they really want to do
- Winnowing, paring down, keep 3-4 lines (5 maximum), do each of them for its own sake, in earnest, and don't argue for the relevance of one to the others (no need to). Again, to the extent that there is some mutual relevance, that will eventually show up in the

"workspace", it should not be turned into an explicit goal of the research.

5. Public activities

a. Publishing: not to overdo it. Publish only what really matters (from either an intellectual or a political point of view), not anything that you may have something to write about

Focus on the journal *Concepts* and bring it to a high European level (say a B level journal), with a strict procedure. Or else, keep *Concepts* as it stands, as a forum for intellectual exchange, and begin from scratch with a journal aimed at reaching an international level. That would be really worth the effort. In the second case, the two publications should be clearly distinguished.

Each group would aim at writing say one really good paper every other year, aim for a "A-rated" journal, find the best topic which would have a chance of getting published, and make it the goal of the group. This is a way of imposing external constraints.

Remember the community has not much time and will not go through the entire production in the hope of finding some nugget: the nugget has to be immediately accessible.

b. Workshops, conferences....: There are far too many workshops etc. Keep to the topics which are really germane. You no longer have to prove that you can organize public events on so many topics.

6. Authority and responsibility

Olga Pombo cannot be in charge of everything. Others must take responsibility for the group's general welfare as well as their own team's.
About the hard choices which will have to be made, if it's too hard or impractical for OP to make them, she could lean on an outside committee which would act as a selector. OP can also use us (the international consultants) either to make the choices, or to defend them in the group (legitimacy).

7. Caveat

Clearly these considerations and recommendations will get contextualized by the rating and conclusions of the inspection committee.

CFCUL'S EXTERNAL CONSULTANT COMMITEE

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