

National Strategic Research and Innovation Priorities – 2027-2031

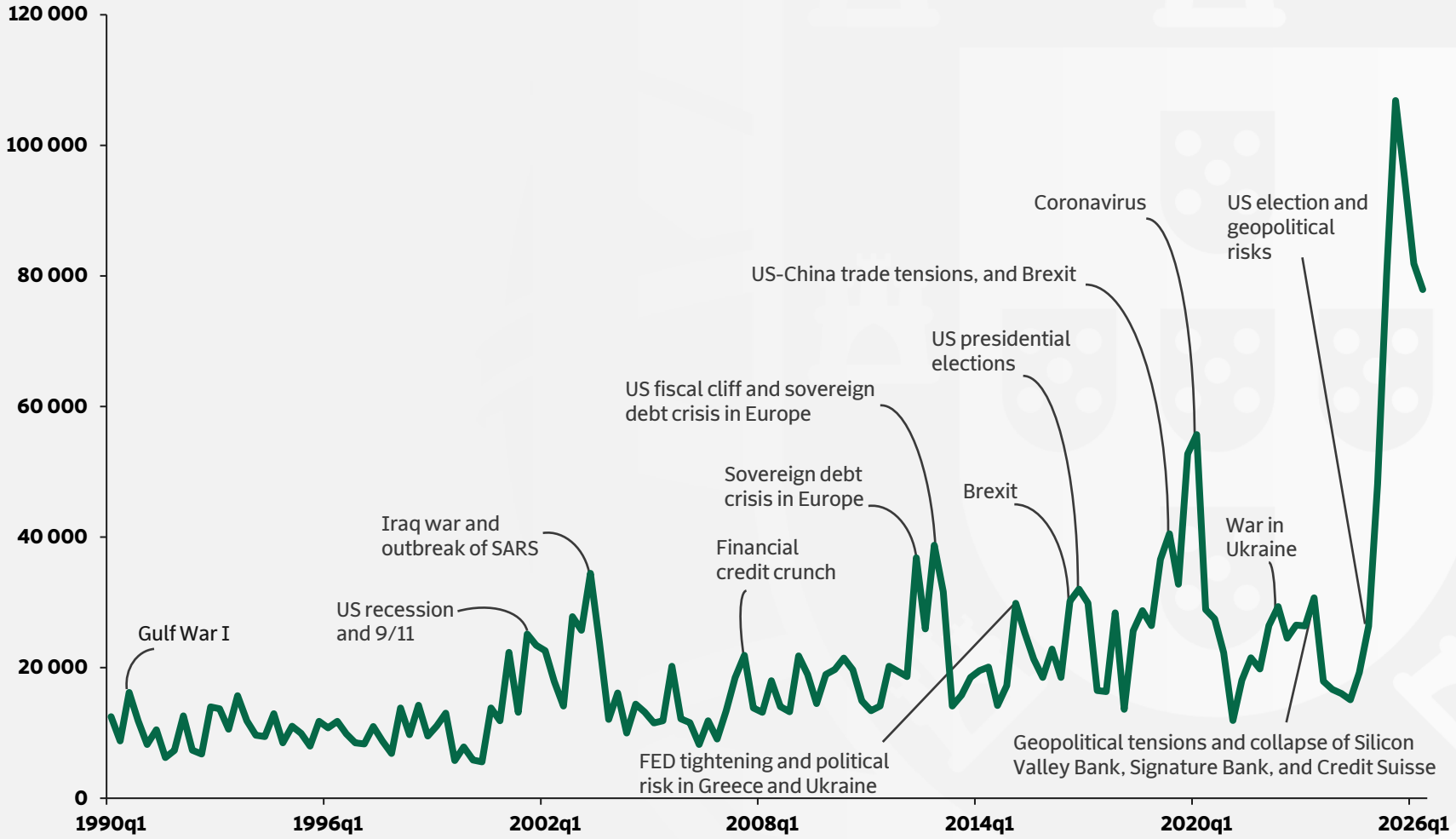
Fernando Alexandre, Minister of Education, Science and Innovation

16 November, 2026, Convento São Francisco, Coimbra

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA | EDUCAÇÃO, CIÊNCIA E INOVAÇÃO

Science and Innovation in an (increasingly) uncertain world

World Uncertainty Index



"What is the deep underlying force driving the human endeavour? It is the ubiquitous effort of humans to render their environment intelligible – to reduce the uncertainties of that environment."

Douglas North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change* (2006)

Nicholas Bloom, Stanford University
Hites Ahir, IMF
Davide Furceri, IMF

The Challenges of the European Union

Geopolitics and geoeconomics

Economic shifts and **technological disruption**

EDUCATION
SCIENCE & INNOVATION

Competitiveness, high value added

Socio-economic transformations

"There are two ways to grow. You can catch up with others, or you can pioneer the next breakthrough. And the latter demands a relentless commitment to fundamental research."

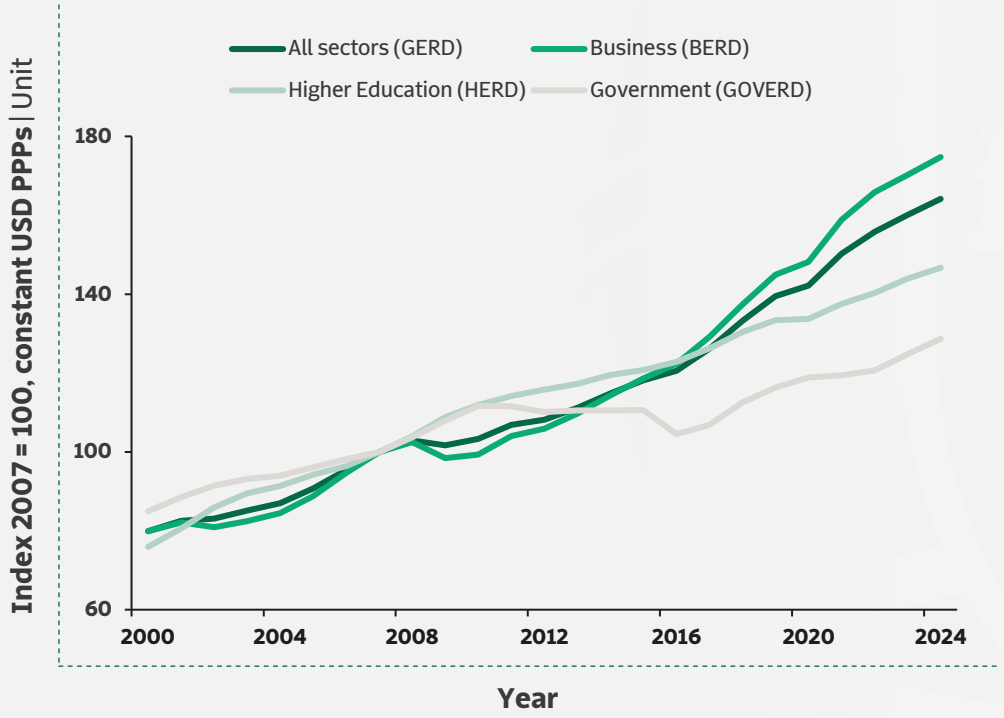


Philippe Aghion, European Commission, 2026

Investment in Science and Innovation

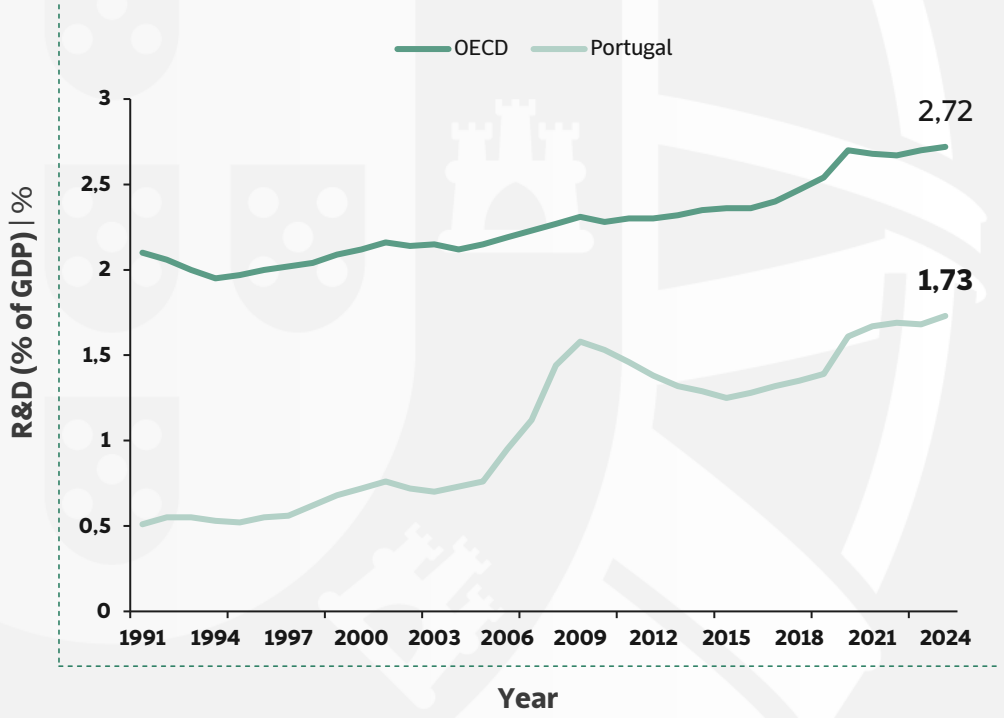
The business enterprise sector recorded the strongest growth in R&D expenditure in the OECD area between 2007 and 2024. Over the longer term, R&D expenditure as a share of GDP rose in both Portugal and the OECD area.

R&D trends by performing sector, OECD area



Source: OECD, 2026

Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D in the OECD and PT

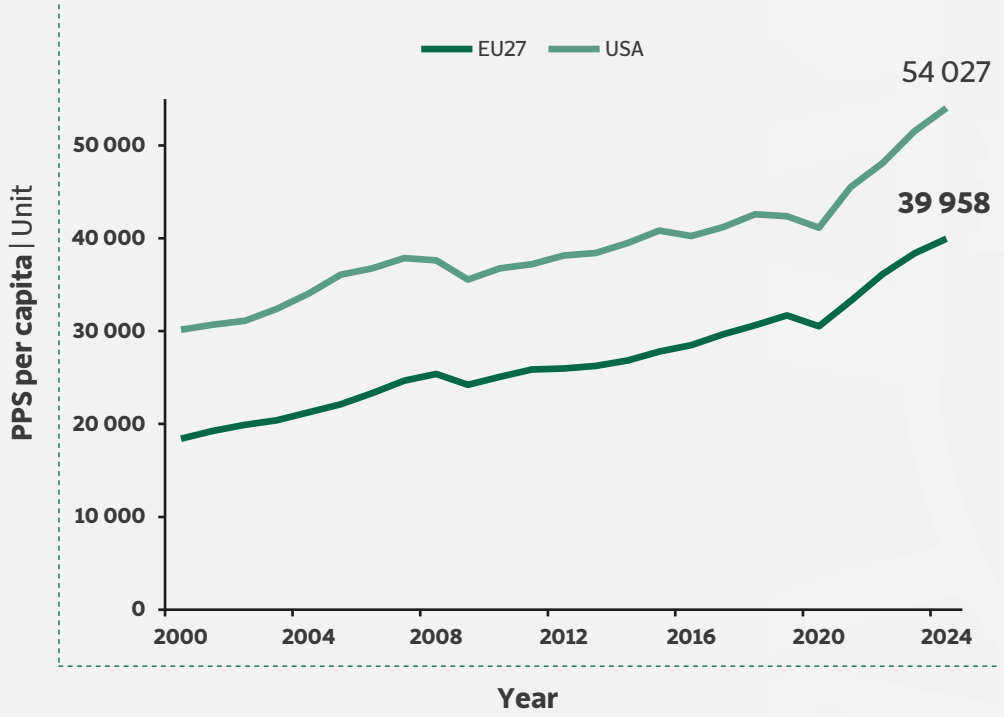


Source: OECD, 2026

Challenges of the European Union

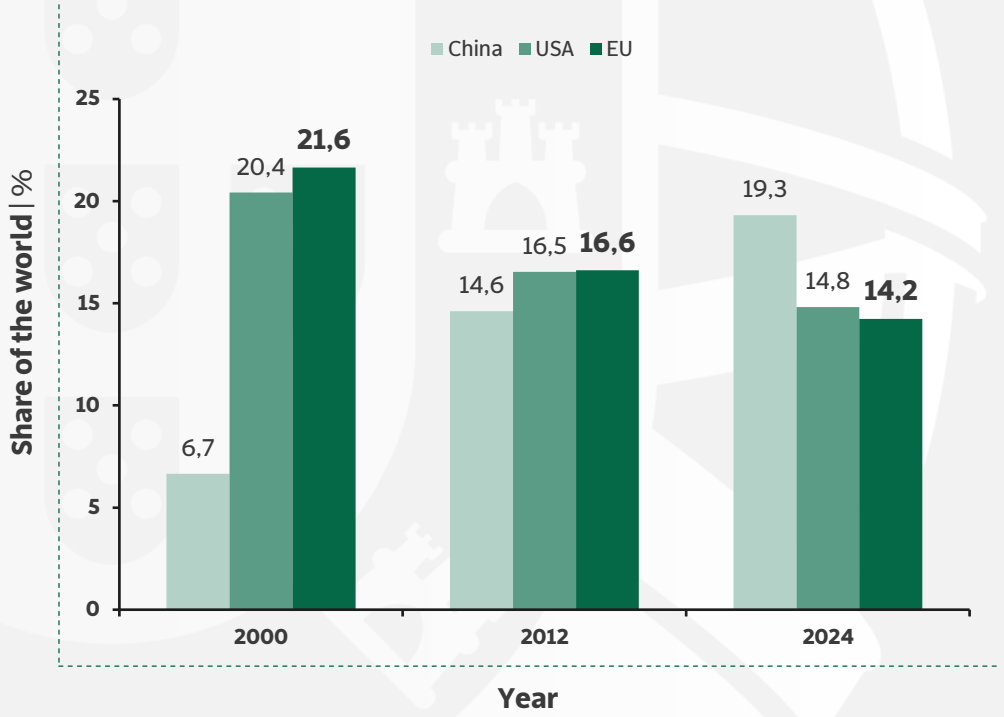
Despite rising income per capita, Europe is **losing** global economic weight, driven by a structural **productivity gap**

GDP at current prices per head of population



Source: AMECO, 2026

GDP based on PPP

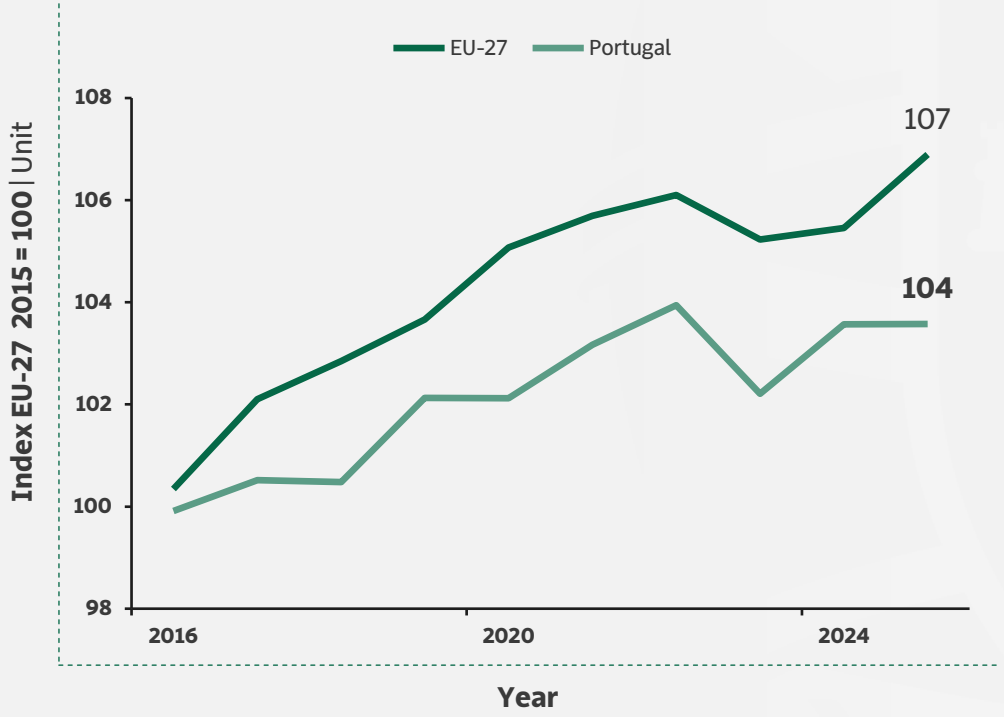


Source: IMF, 2026

Challenges of the Portuguese Society and Economy

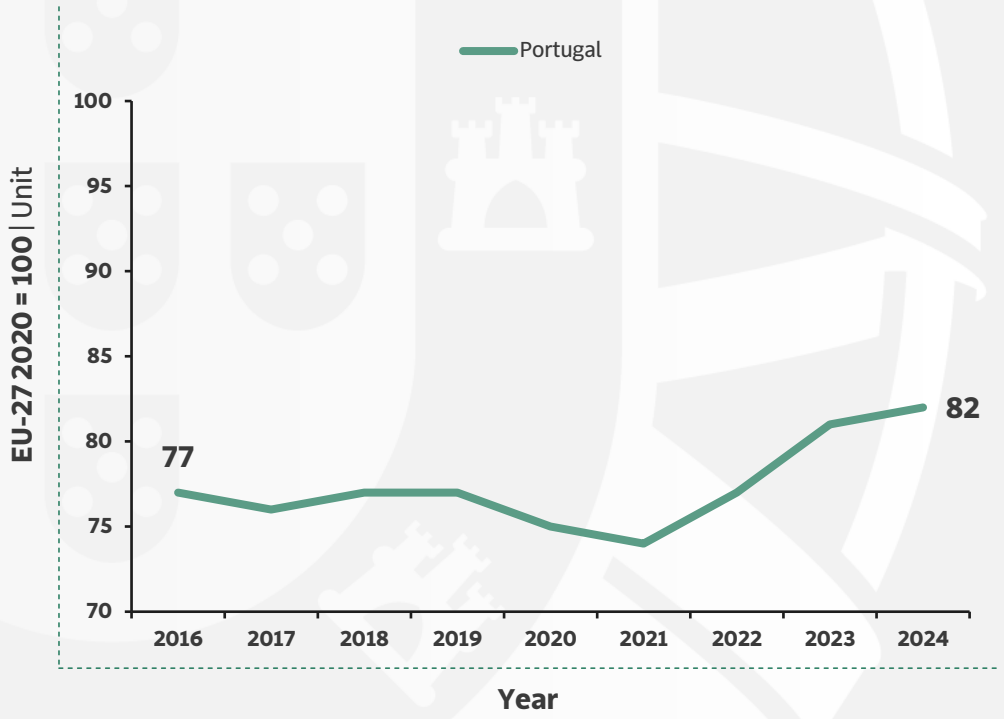
The gap with the EU average has been **widening, not closing.** Higher productivity and higher-value activities are central to stronger economic and social outcomes

Real labour productivity per hour worked



Source: Eurostat, 2026

GDP per capita in PPS

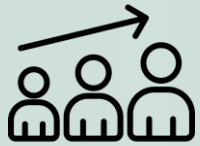


Source: Eurostat, 2026

Other challenges of the Portuguese Society and Economy



Climate change



Ageing



Social and Regional Cohesion



Housing

Portugal 2050: The Vision

Portugal asserts itself as a country that ***creates talent and knowledge and transforms them into economic, social, cultural, and environmental value****, with a dynamic research and innovation system, interconnected through national and international networks, competitive and oriented towards excellence.*

A country where high-quality research, technological development, and science-based entrepreneurship combine to ***drive a more value-added and sustainable economy****, improving people's well-being and strengthening Portugal's position in Europe and the world.*

The Structural Reform of the Portuguese STI System

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

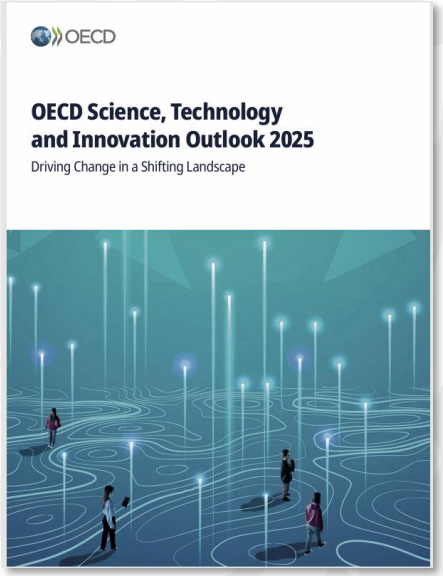
DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS

SCIENCE AND INNOVATION LAW

AGENCY FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (AI²)

STI systems are expected to play a prominent role in advancing transformative change. They ***need to be reformed to generate and deploy relevant knowledge, technologies and innovation at an unprecedent pace and scale****, under conditions of uncertainty and complexity*

OECD STI Outlook 2025, Driving Change in a Shifting Landscape



The new Research and Innovation Agency

More & Better Science with Greater Impact:

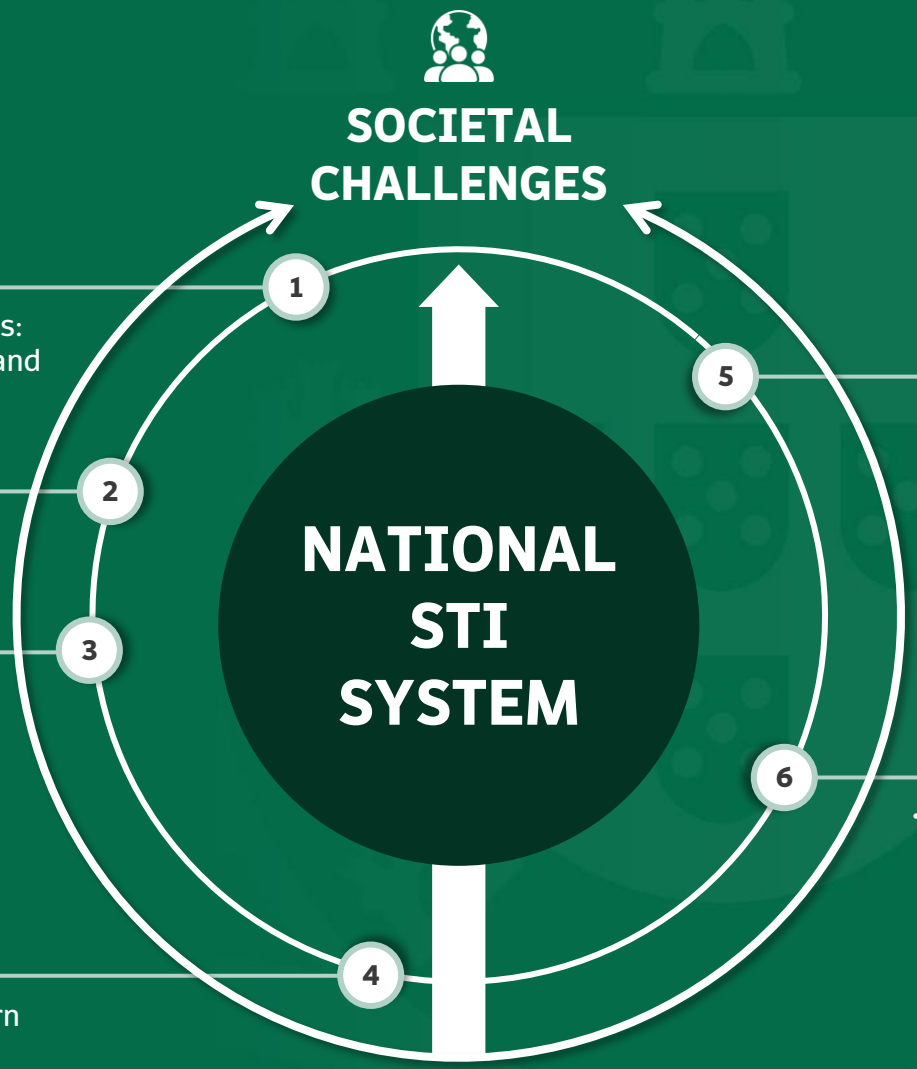
A New Paradigm

- Integration of the **entire value chain** between Research and Innovation
- **Stability and predictability** in Research funding: multiannual contracts and medium- and long-term planning
- **New Governance:** enhanced **autonomy**, goals set in a contract-program and clear **accountability** rules

Agência para a Investigação e Inovação

Strategic assessment for defining national strategic research and innovation priorities

Strategic pillars



Multiannual Budget

- Stable and predictable across all scientific domains: research, advanced training, careers, institutions and infrastructures

Basic Research

- Curiosity-driven and bottom-up, free from predefined themes.

Strategic Domains

- Top-down, medium- to long-term planning
- Aligned with national and regional strategies, and European and global agendas
- Multidisciplinary and cross-ministerial and cross-sectoral research and innovation
- Adaptable under high-uncertainty

Research-Innovation Links

- Collaboration and science-based ventures that turn knowledge into social and economic value

Scientific Employment and Skills

- Stable, attractive careers, advanced skills, mobility and talent retention

Scientific and Technological Infrastructures

- Integrated physical and digital resources, with sustainable and equitable access

Four Strategic Domains to Transform Portugal



Strategic Domains 3

- **Top-down**, medium- to long-term planning
- Aligned with **national** and **regional strategies**, and **European** and **global agendas**
- **Multidisciplinary** and **cross-ministerial** and **cross-sectoral** research and innovation
- **Adaptable** under high-uncertainty

LEVERAGE
Natural Resources, Energy, Climate Adaptation and Territorial Resilience

ACCELERATE
Industrial and Digital Transformation

INHABIT
Housing, Mobility and Smart Cities

LIVE BETTER
Health, Life Sciences and Longevity

Four Strategic Domains to Transform Portugal



Strategic Domains

3

- **Top-down**, medium- to long-term planning
- Aligned with **national** and **regional strategies**, and **European** and **global agendas**
- **Multidisciplinary** and **cross-ministerial** and **cross-sectoral** research and innovation
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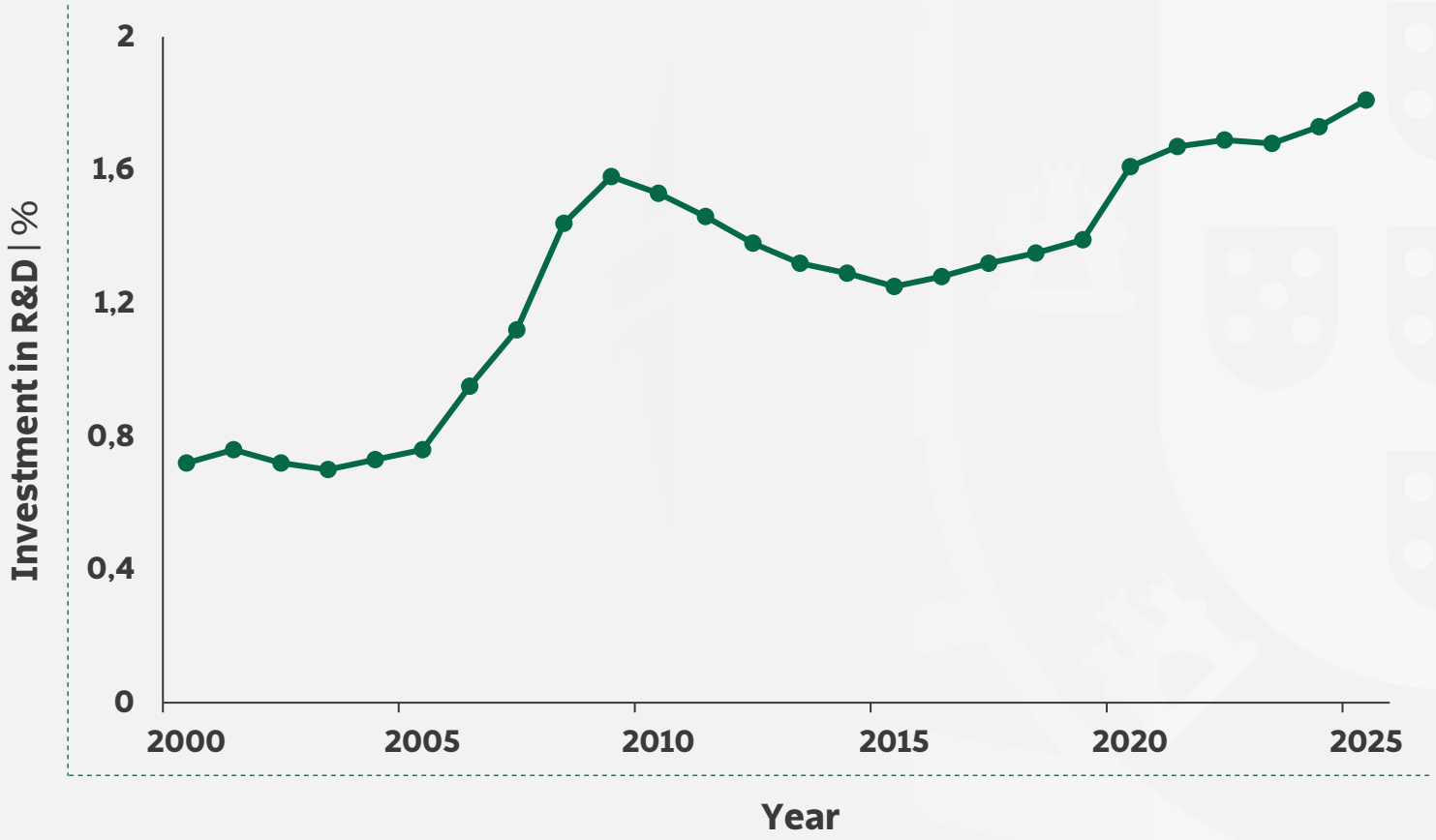
Societal Challenges by Strategic Domains



Investment in Science and Innovation

Investment in R&D in Portugal, 2000-2025



1.81%

Investment in R&D in 2025

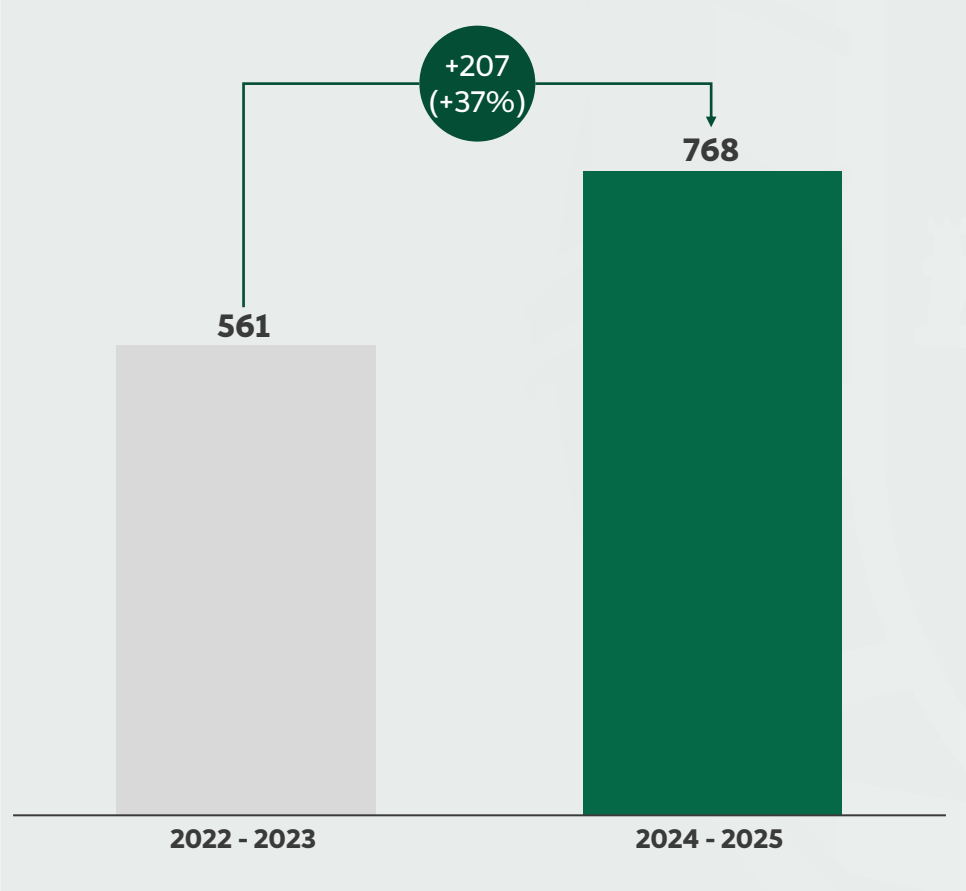
3% *Target 2030*

Source: OECD; Eurostat

Investment in Science and Innovation

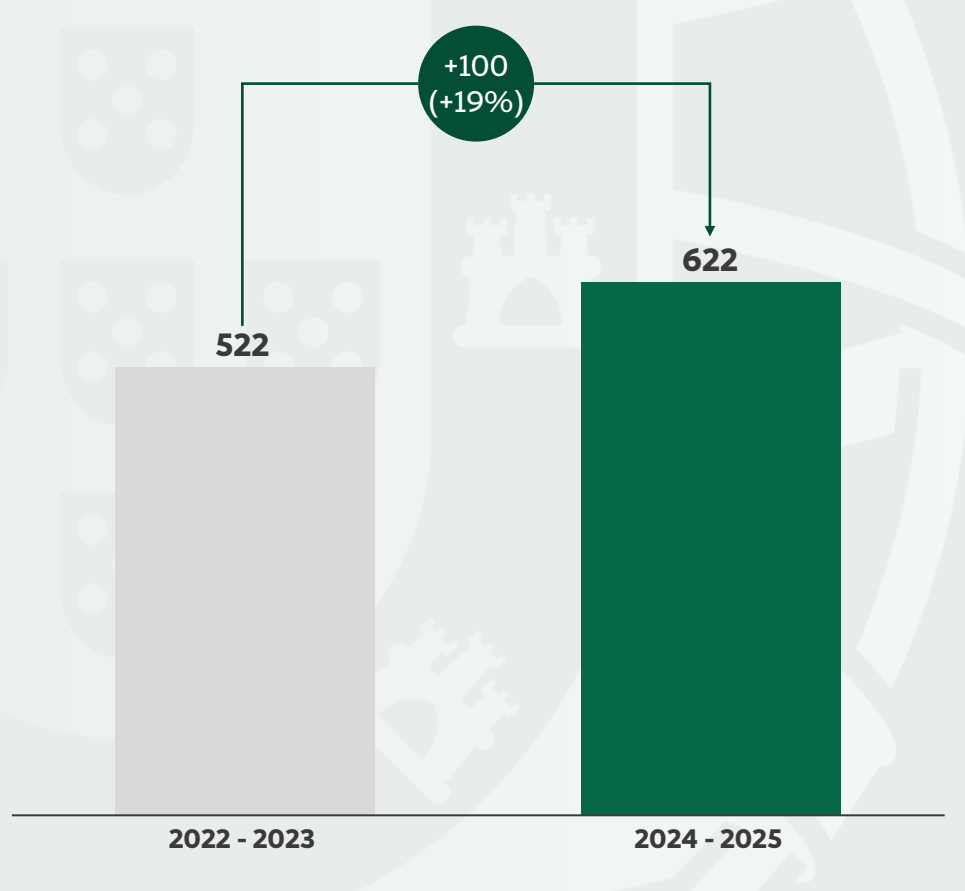
FCT Budget Execution (€M)

Average budget execution in 2022–2023 and 2024–2025



FCT Budget Execution - Tax Revenue (€M)

Average budget execution in 2022–2023 and 2024–2025



Source: FCT/AI[2]; General State Account

AI² Budget Allocation by Pillar



1

Multiannual Budget

- **Stable and predictable** across all scientific domains: research, advanced training, careers, institutions and infrastructures

35-45%

Pillar I – Research & Development

Stable funding across disciplines, with annual increases in public funding in absolute terms

30-40%

Pillar II – Strategic Domains

Funding for the four strategic domains

25-35%

Pillar III – Innovation

Support through AI²'s dedicated innovation unit



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