

# Research problems in Portugal run deep

As founders of the Portuguese National Association of Researchers in Science and Technology (ANICT), we believe that research problems in the country run deeper than just funding (see *Nature* **507**, 306; 2014).

Evaluation procedures for recruitment, career progression and funding allocation are in need of fundamental reform. They must become more transparent and be based solely on merit.

Selection for nationally funded PhD and postdoc scholarships, for example, is beset by conflicting interests and insufficient transparency (see [www.anict.pt](http://www.anict.pt)). The recent cuts in scholarship numbers have exacerbated these factors.

Currently, merit has little influence on career stability or advancement. Many researchers, even team leaders with students and ongoing grants, are being driven to leave the country because of their non-renewable, short-term contracts.

Instead of bickering and passing the buck, Portugal's politicians need to agree on long-term plans to foster and retain the country's talented young researchers.

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