

FCT | FCCN: NAU PROJECT IS NOW SAILING THROUGH KNOWLEDGE SEAS

FCCN, a unit of FCT – the Foundation for Science and Technology, has recently launched the NAU Project, an initiative aiming to implement, develop and operate a Portuguese e-learning platform directed to massive online audiences.



The NAU project goes further than the typical MOOC initiatives, as it supports open and closed courses and will be available beyond high education, reaching also promoters such as public administration and nonprofit organizations. The NAU Platform aims to aggregate all the national initiatives regarding MOOCs in order to reduce costs and reach a larger number of trainees, thus making learning contents more accessible.

The project was officially launched in a public presentation held at Pavilhão do Conhecimento, Lisbon, on September 27 2017, attended by more than 200 participants. The event garnered enthusiastic support from its attendees, receiving very positive feedback.

The Secretaries of State of Science, Technology and Higher Education, Public Administration, Education and the assistant of the Secretary of State of Health were representing the Portuguese government.

Founding institutions

In order to implement the project, a consortium was established composed of: FCCN, INA (a public institution that aims to promote the qualification and mobility among workers in public functions), IEFEP (a public institution to promote the creation and quality of employment and combat

unemployment), Direção Geral da Educação (a governmental body responsible for the implementation of the policies relating to the pedagogical and didactic components of pre-school education, primary and secondary education), Direção Geral de Saúde (the public institution that aims to guide and coordinate health promotion and disease prevention activities) and Secretaria-Geral da Educação e Ciência (a central service under the direct administration of the Portuguese government, providing specialized technical support to government bodies working on the education and science areas).

Such a diverse group of founding institutions reflects the objective to promote and support the e-government concept, enhancing and facilitating new means of communication with the citizens.

With the opening of this Project to the Public Administration at large, the aim is to enable all institutions to reach out, not only to their workforce, but also to their stakeholders and citizens. As an example, the Health Ministry will be able to train thousands of Doctors; the Education Ministry will be able to train Teachers.

The NAU Project is a two year project, co-funded by the European Fund of Regional Development with 689.448 euros, in a total of 1.2 million euros of investment. NAU plans to deliver at least 20 courses each year.

Pictures
Launching the NAU Project at Pavilhão do Conhecimento, Lisbon



Supporting Universities and Public Administration

For the Universities, alongside their current activities, this new platform will provide them with a new place to present their key assets, reaching new audiences and fulfilling at a new level their main mission to provide high quality education.

For FCCN, it is a big step ahead and a great challenge to come, not only technically, but also as a means to reach a large interested public audience. Technically speaking, the NAU Platform will be instantiated on a private cloud infrastructure. The platform will be continually maintained and updated resorting to AGILE methodologies for software development.

During the implementation phase, it is also crucial to maintain a sustainable content production ecosystem, aiming to reduce production costs and create more competitive and higher quality courses.

To sum up, NAU's main goal is to provide a sustainable infrastructure combining technological, educational and communication axis altogether, with specific technical requirements and the need for independence from global MOOC platforms.



A game changer, the NAU project is now sailing through the knowledge seas and discovering new thoughts, experiences, ideas, and new ways of learning.

Origin of the name

The NAU project aims to be a reference of the Portuguese cultural identity in the digital space. In this case, the name chosen says it all: "nau", when loosely translated, means ship, with one particular twist: "nau" is the name of the Portuguese transport ships that sailed during the age of discoveries that succeeded the caravels. Its mission remains roughly the same: to disseminate Portuguese culture throughout the world and "finding new lands" in the "knowledge seas".

Key dates

October 1, 2017	Project start
April 1, 2018	Test phase
June 1, 2018	Go-live
October 1, 2018	Big Bang
October 1, 2019	End