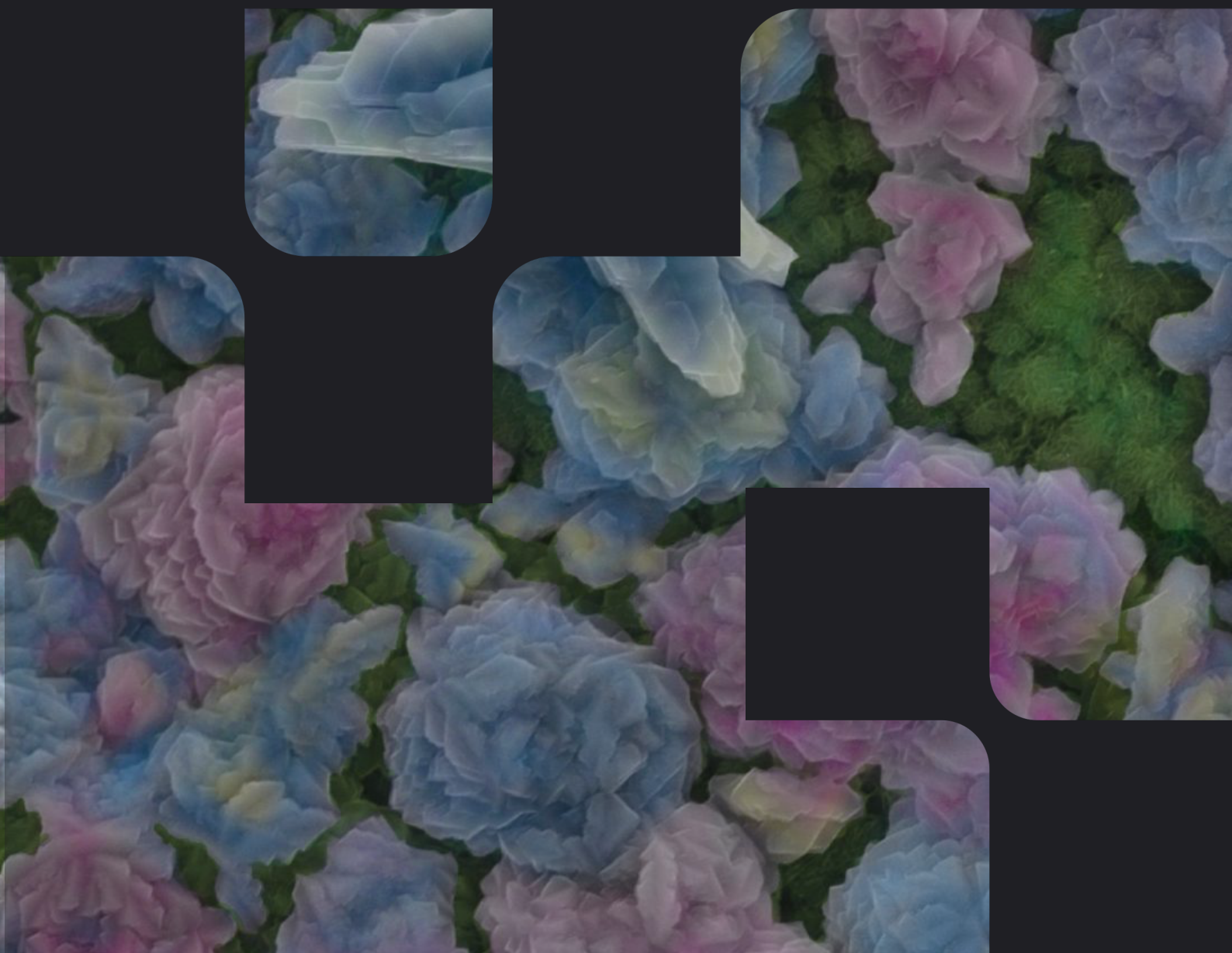
CICECO | Aveiro Institute of Materials
University of Aveiro

Alumni Career Outcome 2026



Executive Summary

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of the career trajectories of doctoral alumni from CICECO – Aveiro Institute of Materials who completed their PhD degrees between 2013 and 2025. Based on employment data collected primarily from LinkedIn profiles in October 2026, the study focused on the professional outcomes of 374 PhD graduates. By providing an overview and identifying patterns in alumni careers, this report aims to inform strategic decisions within the research unit, provide a structure to strengthen connections with former students, and serve as an insight for prospective PhD candidates and stakeholders.

Employment Status and Sectoral Distribution
Among the 314 alumni with known employment outcomes, the majority are integrated into either companies (45%) or research and education institutions (52%). Although employment in industry has become increasingly prominent among recent graduates, higher education institutions and research centres and laboratories remain important career destinations.

Research and Education Sector
164 alumni (52%) are employed in research and education roles. Of these, 20% hold academic teaching positions, 70% work primarily in research, 6% offer research support and 4% are non-HEI teachers. The University of Aveiro emerges as the top employer (35%), followed by other national universities and prominent international institutions.

Companies and Other Sectors
150 alumni (48%) work in companies and other non-academic sectors, distributed across 60 distinct industry sectors. Notably, 71 alumni (47% of this group) are employed in manufacturing-related roles distributed within 20 subsectors. These include pharmaceutical, biochemical, and chemical production (25 alumni), as well as pulp and paper, ceramics, and energy. Regional industry impact is clear with alumni working at a diverse range of Aveiro-based firms. Research-intensive fields such as biotechnology account for another 17 alumni, while other relevant sectors include consulting and IT.

Geographic Reach
CICECO alumni are present in 138 cities across 27 countries and 5 continents. While 63% remain in Portugal, contributing to regional innovation clusters in Aveiro, Coimbra, Porto, and Lisbon, others are employed in global hubs. This broad distribution underscores the institute's international standing and the adaptability of its graduates.

Together, these findings highlight CICECO's dual role as both catalyst for regional innovation and a globally connected research center. The diverse career outcomes of our PhD alumni, from academia and research to industry and government, demonstrate CICECO's effectiveness in preparing highly skilled and adaptable professionals who are shaping science, technology, and society at multiple levels.

Contributors

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Data Availability and Evolution

Figure 1 presents the annual number evolution of PhD graduates from CICECO – Aveiro Institute of Materials between 2013 and 2025, along with the availability of employment information. Out of a total of 374 alumni, we successfully sourced employment data for 314 individuals in October 2026. For 60 alumni (16%), employment status remains unknown. This chart presents the evolution of graduate numbers over the years, and the consistency of the data collection considered on this study.

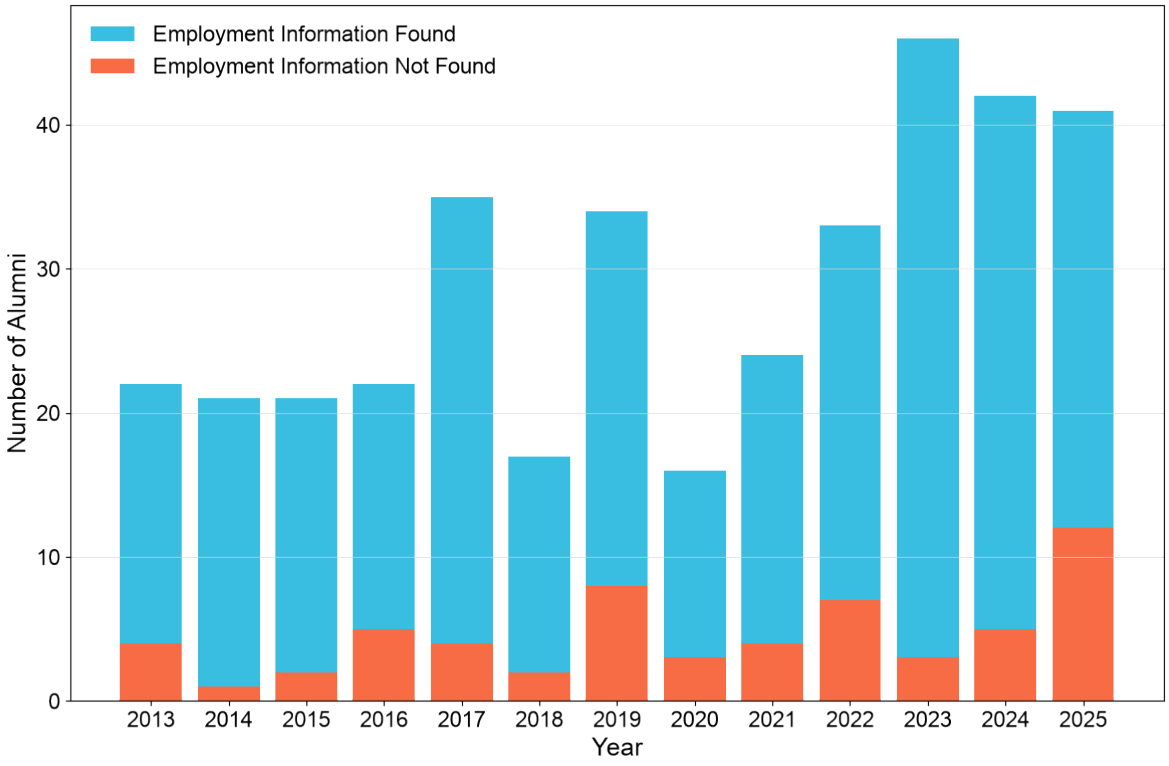


Figure 1 | Annual Number of CICECO PhD Graduates and Availability of Employment Information (2013–2025).

Employment Status Breakdown

The distribution of employment status among CICECO PhD alumni between 2013 and 2025 reveals significant trends in their postdoctoral trajectories. Figure 2 illustrates the spread of alumni across various employment sectors. Of the 314 alumni with known employment status, 142 alumni are currently working in private companies. This trend is particularly evident in recent years, with a notable rise in the number of alumni transitioning into industry. From the 2022 to 2025 group alone saw 67 alumni being directly employed in companies.

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) remain as an important destination, employing 118 alumni, followed by Research Centers and Laboratories (not integrated in HEI) with 39. Smaller numbers are observed in the Public Sector and Government (8 alumni) and in non-HEI Schools (7 alumni).

This data not only highlights the diverse career paths of CICECO PhDs but also reflects a growing connection with the private sector, underlining the institute's impact on industrial research and innovation.

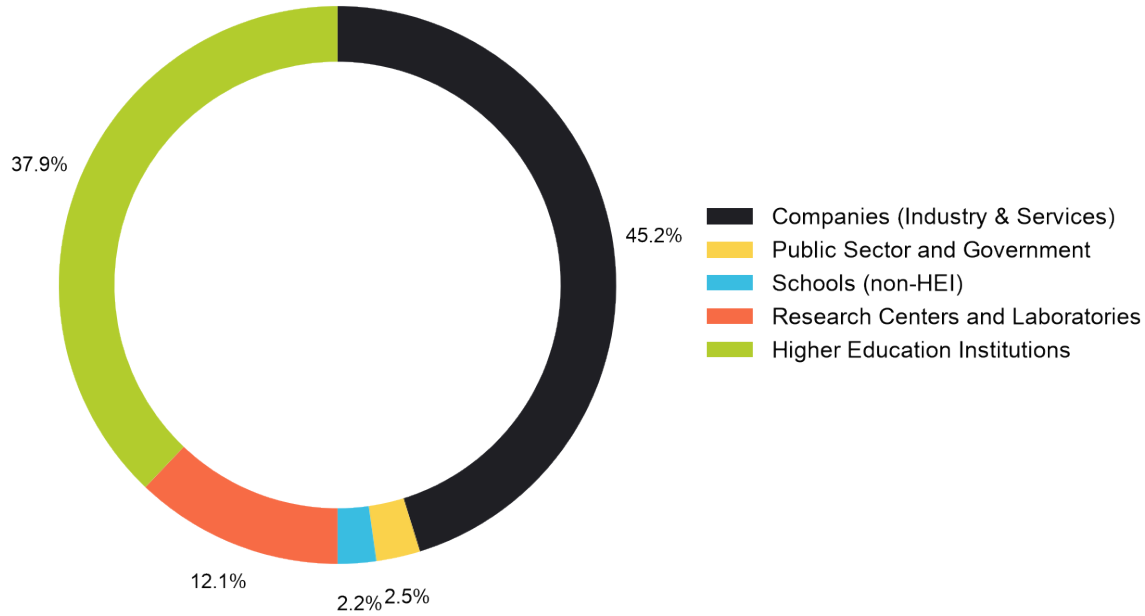


Figure 2 | Employment sector distribution of CICECO PhD alumni (2013–2025) observed in October 2026.

Research and Education Sector

A total of 164 alumni (52%) are employed in the Research and Education sector, highlighting our contribution to academic and scientific development. Within this group, 32 (20%) are engaged in academic roles such as professors and lecturers, 115 (70%) are involved in research, 10 (6%) in research support positions, while the remaining 7 alumni (4%) are non-Higher Education teachers.

The University of Aveiro is the most prominent institutional destination, employing 57 alumni (35%). Other national HEI institutions, including Universidade de Coimbra, Universidade do Porto, and Universidade de Lisboa, collectively host 23 (14%). Internationally, 38 alumni (23%) are employed in HEI institutions such as Imperial College London, KU Leuven, University of Sheffield and University of Southern California, and various federal universities across Brazil.

A further 13 alumni (8%) are currently employed in Research Centers and Laboratories (RC&L), with 13 (8%) being placed in national collaborative laboratories and innovation hubs, such as NET4CO2, BIOREF, AccelBio, RAIZ, CTCV and CeNTI, and 26 (16%) in international R&D entities like Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Empa (Switzerland), SIFBI (Singapore), and ICIQ (Spain).

Figure 3 provides a visual distribution by both functional role and institutional type, across academia and research-focused organizations.

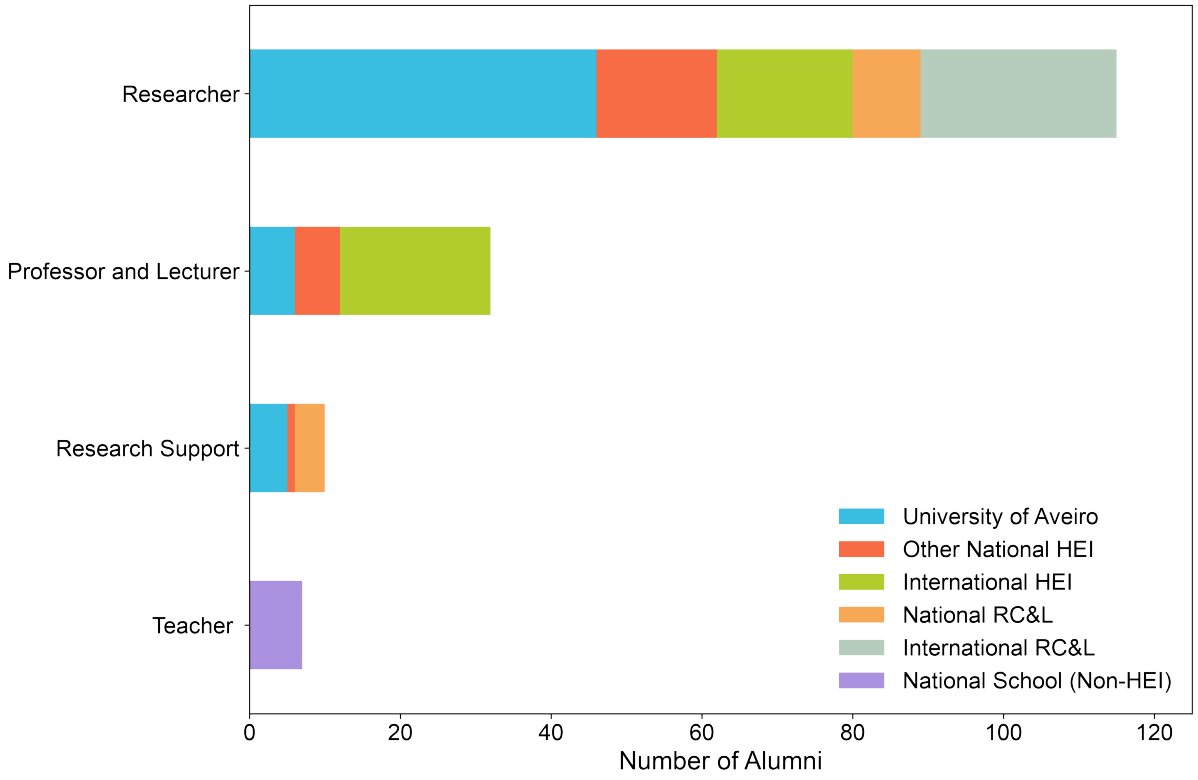


Figure 3 | Distribution by position and institutional type in the research and education sector (2013–2025).

Companies and Other Sectors

This section explores the professional destinations of CICECO doctoral alumni working in companies and other non-academic sectors. Based on a sample of 150 alumni (48%), the analysis reveals their distribution across 60 distinct economic sectors, as illustrated in Figure 4, highlighting a diverse career ecosystem.

A significant finding is the strong presence of alumni in manufacturing, with 71 individuals (47% of this group) working across 20 different manufacturing subsectors. These include pharmaceutical, biochemical, and chemical manufacturing, which collectively account for 25 alumni. Additional key areas include pulp and paper, glass and ceramics, electronics, and energy technologies. Employers in these sectors include leading Portuguese companies such as Hovione and The Navigator Company, prominent companies based in the Aveiro region, including Grestel, INDASA, Palbit, Sanitana, and Vista Alegre Atlantis, and major international corporations such as Bosch, Volvo, Airbus, Synthomer, and Honeywell, demonstrating CICECO's regional and international impact.

Research intensive sectors such as biotechnology also feature prominently, employing 17 alumni (11% of the sample), and are driven by innovation-focused enterprises like FairJourney Biologics, Biotrend AS, Roche and Holiferm. Other relevant sectors include consulting and software development.

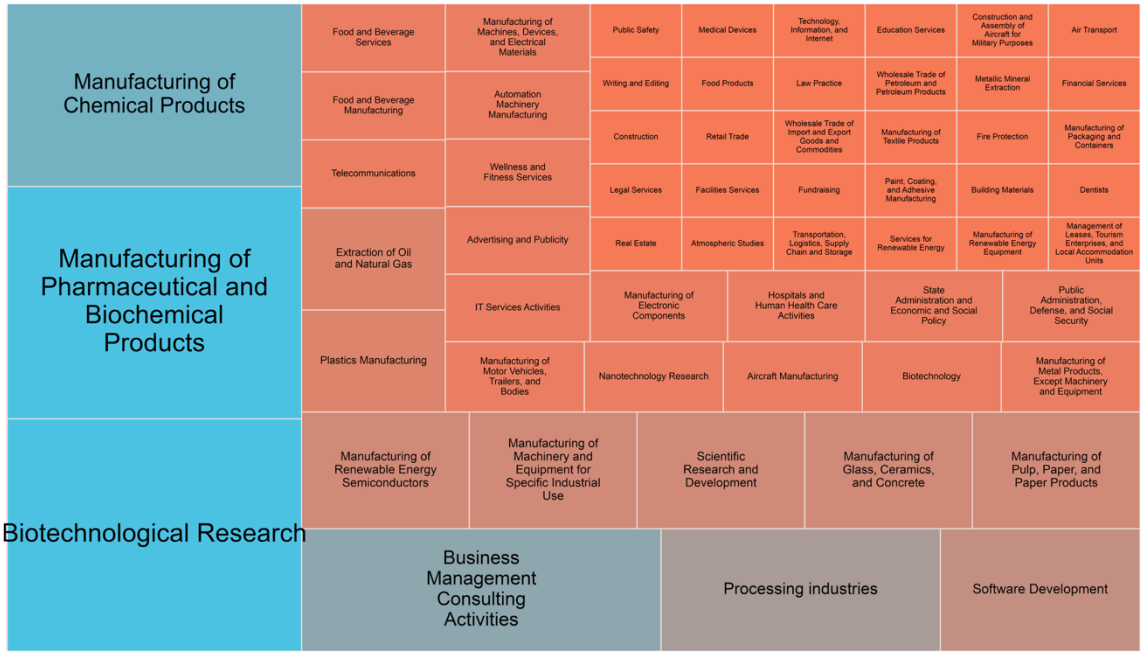


Figure 4 | Distribution of CICECO alumni across company sectors (LinkedIn company classification). Sector areas are scaled by number of alumni and shaded on a gradient from orange to blue according to density.

International Distribution

The CICECO PhD alumni established a strong international presence, spreading across 27 countries, 138 cities, and 5 continents, as shown in Figure 5. This wide distribution demonstrates the global relevance of the doctoral training provided by CICECO and the capacity of its alumni to integrate into diverse academic, research, and industrial ecosystems.

Portugal remains the leading destination, hosting 63% of all alumni. Within Portugal, employment is particularly concentrated in major academic and industrial centres, including Aveiro, Porto, Lisbon, and Coimbra, reflecting the strong presence of research institutions and innovation-driven companies in these locations.

A total of 116 CICECO graduates (37%) pursue professional careers abroad, primarily in other European countries, which account for 73 alumni (23%), while a further 43 (14%) are distributed across 34 locations beyond Europe. Their professional destinations include major international research and innovation hubs such as Zurich, London, São Paulo, Madrid, and Los Angeles. This global footprint highlights the international mobility of CICECO graduates and the worldwide reach of its research community.

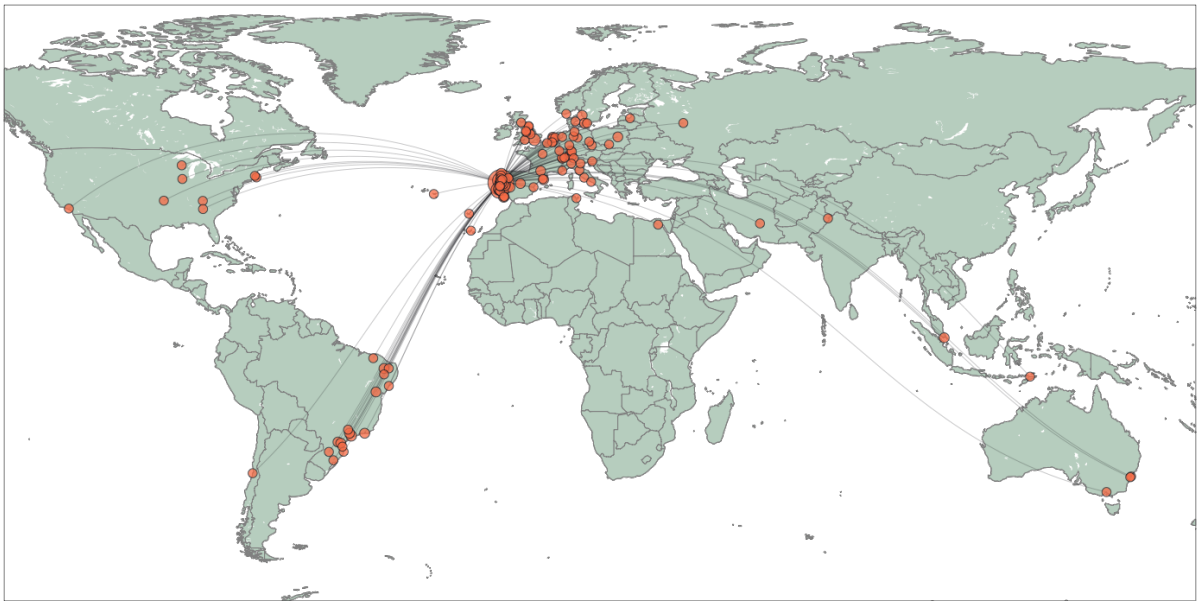


Figure 5 | Global distribution of CICECO PhD alumni (2013–2025), with arcs connecting Aveiro to cities around the world where alumni employment is based.

Final Thoughts

Over the past decades, the journey of CICECO's doctoral alumni has evolved into a remarkable story of excellence, adaptability, and global reach. As we reflect on the data presented in this report, we are both proud and inspired by the impact our alumni are making, whether advancing scientific frontiers, driving innovation in industry, or contributing to education and policy across the globe.

This alumni report not only showcases individual achievements but also underscores the strength of the ecosystem we've built together. From Aveiro to Zurich, São Paulo to Singapore, the presence of our graduates is a testament to the quality of training and the collaborative spirit that define CICECO.

As a research unit, we are deeply committed to nurturing this community. The connections we maintain with our alumni are more than symbolic, they are essential to our growth, relevance, and innovation. Your success enriches our legacy and reinforces the value of investing in scientific excellence, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Looking ahead, we aim to strengthen these ties through more structured engagement, knowledge exchange, and opportunities for collaboration. Whether through mentoring, joint projects, or institutional partnerships, we believe that our alumni will continue to be integral to our mission.

To all who have been part of this journey: thank you. You are not only our past, but also our future. Let us continue building bridges between research, society, and industry – together.

Paula Vilarinho

Vice-Director

CICECO – Aveiro Institute of Materials


Aveiro Institute of Materials