



*Foreword by* **Gui Menezes**

Regional Secretary for the Sea, Science and Technology

The ‘Atlantic centrality’ of the Azores represents not only an asset, but – and above all – a unique location for scientific and technological development of our Region in many domains.

Growth based on knowledge and innovation, involving the society and entrepreneurs, is at the heart of our vision for the future of the Azores.

While making the most of the geostrategic position of the archipelago, the Government of the Azores has implemented, over the last 10 years, an investment policy in space related infrastructures, some of them within ESA and European Union programs and initiatives, following a strategy to boost synergies among various stakeholders linked to Space.

Now, and once again, the Government of the Azores reinforces the commitment to this sector by supporting activities that may contribute to the promotion and implementation of new processes related to the Space industry, which may contribute to strengthen the regional, national and European position within the context of “New Space” initiatives.

The Azores have one of the most comprehensive business incentive systems in the European Union, with attractive reimbursement rates that provide good investment opportunities.

We have the lowest Corporate Income Tax (CIT) in Portugal (20% less than on mainland), which is also the eighth lowest CIT rate in the European Union.

We also have the second lowest Value Added Tax (VAT) rates in the European Union and the lowest Personal Income Tax (PIT) rate in the country (up to 30% less than on mainland Portugal), which constitute tax benefits that can be granted to strategic investment projects.

The unique investment context of the Azores includes also programs that promote the creation of permanent jobs, which guarantee financial support to companies that hire new full-time employees.

Our Region has industrial and technological parks with excellent infrastructures, benefitting from a high-speed communications network, provided by a submarine cable fibre optic system, linking the archipelago to the USA and Europe, with commercial harbours and airports on all Azorean islands, allowing for millions of passengers and tons of cargo to pass annually.

The Government of the Azores trusts that Research and Development programs can bring effective benefits not only to the Region but also to the partners who are involved, and we believe Space knowledge and the opportunities that the future space exploration will open will be the answer to many of the challenges of modern society.

We have the conditions and the ambition to be part of this future, for the well-being of our citizens and for a better living planet.

