

3 May 2011



Prof. Dr. Dirk Helbing
Scientific Coordinator - FuturICT
Chair of Sociology
ETH Zurich
Clausiusstraße 50
8092 Zürich
Switzerland

RE: FuturICT – Expression of Interest

Dear Prof. Helbing

On behalf of the Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network (AURIN), I would like to express our interest in the FuturICT Flagship Proposal.

AURIN is a three year, \$20mil project funded under the Australian Commonwealth Government Super Science initiative. The intent of the AURIN Project is to enhance the understanding of urban resource use and management through the provision of a multifaceted data access and e-Research infrastructure. It aims at providing –as far as possible – open access to data to the build environment and urban research communities, in conjunction with an advanced suite of data interrogation, simulation and visualization tools orchestrated in a workflow environment supporting advanced urban research.

The utility of the established e-Infrastructure is demonstrated through a suite of ten aspirational demonstrator projects, spanning from population and demographic futures and benchmarked social indicators, through urban health and well-being to urban transport, logistics, vulnerability and risks, and urban design. In its scope and depth, AURIN is uniquely positioned to contribute to insights about the physical, social and economical environment of Australia. It is the only such project to cover a whole nation and span an entire continent, worldwide.

In the social sciences, a project of the scope and scale of FuturICT is long overdue. The holistic approach to the study of the interactions and evolution of complex, global social systems require a large, multidisciplinary effort, spanning numerous disciplines and requiring an unprecedented wealth of data and computing infrastructure. We welcome the pan-European FuturICT initiative as an important step towards a global social sciences observatory.

We believe that to truly cover the trends and complexities of our globalised society, FutureICT will need to reach to datasets and capabilities beyond Europe. While AURIN's mission covers only a fraction of the subject areas covered in the FuturICT, we believe that here is potential for collaboration in terms of access to data and data interrogation tools and models.

Yours sincerely,

Robert J. Stimson
Director