

FuturICT taking the next step to address 21st Century Challenges

FuturICT (www.futurict.eu), scientifically lead by Professor Dirk Helbing (ETHZ) and coordinated by Professor Steven Bishop (UCL) has now submitted an [outstanding proposal](#) to the EC on behalf of a consortium of leading EU universities and research organisations. FuturICT was rated 1st out of the 21 proposals received for the initial stage of the competition which asks for visionary and highly ambitious proposals around Big Science projects that extend over a 10 year period and €1 Billion budget. The [report on the FuturICT Pilot Phase](#) was rated “excellent” by the external reviewers.

Besides the involvement of more than 80 academic powerhouses in more than 25 European countries, vibrant research communities integrating ICT experts, social and complexity scientists have been established in USA, South America, Japan, China, and Australia.

The unifying goal of the FuturICT FET flagship is to integrate the fields of information and communication technologies (ICT), social sciences and complexity science, to develop a new kind of participatory science and technology that will help us to understand, explore and manage the complex, global, socially interactive systems that make up our world today, while at the same time paving the way for a new paradigm of ICT systems that will leverage socio-inspired self-organisation, self-regulation, and collective awareness.

FuturICT capitalizes on three developments: the collection of Big Data and Open Data of techno-socio-economic activities, the availability of previously unseen supercomputing power, and opportunities created by social media and socially interactive technologies. These developments will eventually enable the creation of a “Planetary Nervous System” to measure the state of the world in real-time, a “Living Earth Simulator” to study possible scenarios resulting from causal interdependencies between different processes and systems, and a “Global Participatory Platform” to allow people to solve problems collaboratively that are more complex than any one individual or team can handle. FuturICT will hence develop new science and technology to better manage the opportunities and challenges of our complex, connected world. FuturICT will also create new business opportunities through its new ICT paradigm, characterized by socio-inspired ICT, a co-evolution of ICT with society, platforms for collective awareness, ethical and value-sensitive design, and a whole new information ecosystem fuelled by FuturICT’s Innovation Accelerator, Global Systems Science, and Exploratories which are strongly linked to industry verticals.

FuturICT is in perfect alignment with Europe’s Vision 2020 with its strong focus on innovation and socio-economic-environmental as well as health challenges. Big Data and Open Data are the “oil of the 21st century” and as Europe is scarce of natural resources, it must build on ideas so the ability to refine them can become Europe’s newest resource. Innovations in this area will offer new opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses, for self-employment and stimulate an age of creativity leading to economic, social and cultural prosperity.

Over the next few weeks the EC will seek review of the six final proposals with a view to funding two FET Flagship projects starting in 2013.