

From: Lawrence Vale <ljvale@MIT.EDU>
Subject: Re: Urgent-Towards e-Planning as part of MIT-Portugal
Date: Wed, 17 May 2006 22:40:08 -0400
To: Pedro Ferraz de Abreu <pfa@mit.edu>

Cc: Joseph Ferreira <jf@mit.edu>

Dear Pedro,

Many thanks for sending along your latest version of the proposal for collaboration between MIT/DUSP and various university programs in Lisbon on the topic of e-Planning and Urban Information Systems. I can confirm the strong interest of the MIT Department of Urban Studies in exploring the exciting dimensions for research and collaboration described in this document. Our joint efforts to link emerging information and communication technologies to initiatives to improve public administration and urban management seem particularly relevant to the challenges of enhancing economic performance and innovation in Portugal. I very much hope that this aspect of joint work can be included in the MIT-Portugal collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

Larry Vale

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Date: Thu, 18 May 2006 02:11:28 -0400
From: Joseph Ferreira <jf@MIT.EDU>
To: Pedro Ferraz de Abreu <pfa@mit.edu>

CC: ljvale@mit.edu

Pedro,

Thanks for sending the draft document discussing e-Planning and its possible inclusion as part of the MIT-Portugal initiative. I am indeed interested in working with you and your Portuguese colleagues on research and educational activities involving urban information systems and the many ways in which information technology is transforming urban life and enabling new approaches to urban planning, urban management, and local governance. Such work could build nicely on past collaboration with you, Prof. Camara and others, and could be an especially important part of any effort to enhance economic performance and innovation in Portugal through well chosen infrastructure investments in transportation, energy, and information systems. I do hope that some e-Planning work can fit within the MIT-Portugal collaboration and I look forward to further discussion of specific projects and activities with you and your colleagues.

-- Joe Ferreira

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Prof. Joseph Ferreira, Jr.

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ASSESSMENT OF AN MIT-PORTUGAL COLLABORATION
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

FINAL REPORT
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PROGRAM DIRECTOR: DANIEL ROOS, PROFESSOR AND FOUNDING DIRECTOR, MIT
ENGINEERING SYSTEMS DIVISION

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evaluations of research centers carried out in previous years by the Portuguese Government, through the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation (FCT). This allowed us to identify existing research skills in Portugal and to confirm the level of excellence of those Portuguese groups previously identified on the basis of existing collaborations with MIT faculty. Any of the original Focus Areas would have been dropped if there had been a lack of interest on the part of MIT faculty or our faculty partners in Portugal.

Most MIT international collaborations have utilized a diffusion strategy where we work initially with a single university in the host country. Over time, the results of that collaboration are transferred to other universities in the country. However, in the particular case of Portugal, we have understood the requirement imposed by the Portuguese Government in terms of the need to involve various institutions and research centers in any potential collaboration with MIT. Consequently, we have agreed to follow a different approach in Portugal where we will work with national consortia in each of the focus areas. Since Portugal is a relatively small country, many university research groups in the focus areas are below critical size. By forming Portuguese consortia, we can bring together the best researchers and research groups from the universities and research institutes throughout the country. However, we need to recognize that it will be more complex for MIT to interact with a consortium than with a single university. The consortia that have been formulated for the assessment may be restructured once the work plan has been finalized to reflect the initiatives that will be pursued. We must ensure that the best Portuguese organization, or combination of organizations, is selected for each initiative. Therefore, for potential future projects to be considered in addition to the initial launching areas of collaboration, it might be advisable to invite several Portuguese organizations to submit proposals which will be evaluated for technical excellence to determine which organization is selected.

Many faculty members in Portugal and at MIT have expressed interest in participating in this collaboration and have suggested additional research projects and focus areas. An example of such proposals is a preliminary tentative project on "e-planning." The start-up strategy to limit the number of initial focus areas has precluded including additional projects or focus areas during the first year. We anticipate that new initiatives can be proposed in the annual plans submitted in subsequent years. Those new initiatives can occur at several different levels. Seed research and planning studies can be utilized to study the feasibility of a new project that does not relate to an existing focus area. Some of these planning studies will evolve into new projects, whereas others will not go beyond the planning stage. In addition, new focus areas can also be implemented by the Governing Committee (See Section 1.F). Therefore, the overall relationship consists of a spectrum of initiatives ranging from seed research to individual projects to focus areas to anchor programs.

Although we have received suggestions about many potential projects and focus areas, we mention "e-planning" initiatives in particular because we have received many expressions of interest from faculty in Portugal and MIT. We suggest that the "e-planning" initiatives should be the subject of further analyses during the coming year after the launching of the initial program.