

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
RESEARCH DIRECTOR
OF THE VOLVO RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS INITIATIVE
FINANCING URBAN ACCESS
GUIDELINES

The need for a new urban access paradigm

The global urban population will double in the next 40 years. Existing cities will face enormous pressures on how to manage the changes associated with this growth. Some cities will grow rapidly and some cities will contract. Finding ways forward for balancing the pressures on how to use land, how to develop infrastructure, and how to address the social pressures emanating from the changing nature of different social classes will require new ways of financing investments as well as new ways of governance.

The time is ripe for a *new access paradigm* in urban transport. The current paradigm could be called a *timesavings paradigm*, since it by and large is based on the assumption that access is provided by travel speed and thus focuses on mobility. This paradigm emerged out of the first decades after WWII and the ensuing urban sprawl, and is now the dominant paradigm in the developing world. Social inclusion does not figure into this paradigm – in contrast to similar urban paradigms for clean water, health and education or, in rural areas, for electrification – nor does the environment or, for that matter, economic development.

Focusing on socially inclusive access will necessarily have to be linked with financing and governance, since achieving social inclusion in all likelihood will require large additional resources. Since it is unlikely that these resources will come exclusively from user fees, further beneficiaries of improved urban access will have to be identified and possible additional place-based sources of revenues discussed.

The VREF Financing Urban Access initiative

VREF developed the Financing Urban Access initiative at a preparatory workshop with 25 international experts (Bellagio, May 2012), followed by a start-up phase in which an Interim Steering Board has developed a Road Map for the initiative. The background papers for the Bellagio workshop will be published by Routledge in March 2014, under the title *Urban Access for the 21st Century: Finance and governance models for transport infrastructure*. A second set of synthesis papers has been developed during the start-up phase.

The mission of the Financing Urban Access initiative will be to develop and test analytical frameworks for how to achieve socially inclusive urban access, including its financing and governance. New paradigms will have to be developed around land-use and urban transport in order to achieve more socially inclusive access. New ideas will have to be developed for coordinated governance of these systems and for where to find and how to raise the revenues for financing the necessary investments and their operations. Taken together, these challenges may well require new paradigms for how urban access should be governed.

The Road Map has identified four important themes to be addressed in the initiative:

- Measuring access and estimating its impact: The FUA initiative should make a systematic effort to develop metrics for access improvement (as well as deterioration of access), for different economic actors and social groups, which can capture impacts on a wide variety of beneficiaries. Developing appropriate models will be a key component in this work.
- The financing and organization of access: The FUA initiative should make a systematic effort to map how different urban access systems are financed today, how the costs of services provided are distributed, and how all this reflects constitutional principles, national legislation and local circumstances. No such empirically-based map exists today.
- The institutional design and governance of access: The FUA initiative will need to think creatively about institutional design and governance. Many aspects could be considered, including what to include and what to exclude in a more detailed analysis (it will, *e.g.*, be necessary to consider the extent to which land use and transport actually can be integrated). A deep dialogue between academics and practitioners with experience in urban governance will be necessary.
- The organization and financing of urban transport: The FUA initiative should sketch possible forms of how integration between urban transport modes could be reflected in organization and cross financing from wider sources of revenues than are used today – perhaps ending up in one urban transport utility.

However, because this initiative is not a mainstream academic research program but rather a journey into uncharted and foggy terrain, the four themes are not written in stone.

The initiative will consist of two phases. During the first phase (2015-2016/17), the key questions that have to be addressed in order to develop new paradigms will be formulated. The aim of the second phase (2017-2018/19) will be to test the key concepts of the new paradigms, in interactive work together with interested city leaders. Academics and practitioners will participate in both phases, but with different intensities and modes of interaction. The VREF expects that a successful initiative will create durable networks of researchers and practitioners that can begin to assist interested city leaders in exploring new approaches.

Research Director for the VREF Financing Urban Access initiative

The VREF invite senior professionals to submit an Expression of Interest for the position of Research Director for the FUA initiative. The Research Director will be chosen in two steps during January – June 2014. This open call to submit Expressions of Interest is the first step. In the second step the most promising candidates will be invited to submit a proposal describing how they would like to set up the research project. The VREF Board expects to appoint a Research Director in June 2014, who will be tasked to select a core team of researchers and develop a project plan for the first phase of the initiative.

The role of the Research Director will be to lead the project team and the intellectual progress of the initiative. The Research Director will be responsible for developing project plans/work programs, annual progress reports and final reports to the VREF. The Research Director should also be a driver of the scientific and popular publication of findings from the initiative.

We envisage that the Research Director will be a senior professional/academic with a wide network amongst both researchers and practitioners. The Research Director will need to

have an affiliation with a relevant and supportive research institution willing and capable of hosting the program. The Research Director should be ready to devote most of her/his time over the next five years to the VREF Financing Urban Access initiative. We believe that good candidates can come from many different fields of expertise, even outside the established urban transport field.

Step 1: Expression of Interest

In the first step potential candidates are invited in an open call to submit an Expression of Interest in the form of short letter together with some basic background information (see guidelines below). An Evaluation Group, appointed by the VREF Board, will select the most interesting candidates, who will be invited to participate in the second step.

Step 2: Proposals

In the second step the selected candidates will be invited to submit full proposals describing how they would like to profile the FUA initiative and organize the work. The Evaluation Group will also interview the selected candidates. Based on the written proposals and the interviews, the Evaluation Group will present a shortlist to the VREF. The VREF Scientific Council will review the shortlist before the VREF Board appoints a Research Director and a Host Institution for the FUA initiative. The Host Institution will receive a Planning Grant of SEK 250 000 from VREF earmarked for developing a project plan.

Step 3: Project Plan and Project Team

Once appointed by VREF, the Research Director will select the core team of researchers and, together with the team, develop a project plan for the first phase of the initiative. The first phase will start early 2015.

Guidelines for the Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest (EoI) must be submitted by e-mail to secretariat@vref.se **no later than 20 February 2014**. The EoI should consist of the following components:

- A personal letter from the applicant, describing briefly your background and current position, your interest in the VREF Financing Urban Access initiative and your views on how it best could be implemented. You should also motivate why you would like to be the Research Director and how you can contribute to the success of the initiative. The letter should be maximum 1000 words.
- A summary CV
- Your 2-3 most relevant published articles/papers/book chapters, etc.

The Expression of Interest should be submitted in PDF file format. The personal letter and CV must be written in English, be laid out in European A4 paper format, with a minimum font size of 12 pt and margins of at least 25 mm. The articles should be in English. Please avoid articles/papers/chapters longer than 8000 words.

For legal reasons, VREF can fund academic research only. Thus, the Expression of Interest must be associated with and supported by the candidate's university.

Please e-mail secretariat@vref.se for further information on the call, or for clarification regarding the requirements for Expressions of Interest. To ensure maximum transparency in the process, all questions, and VREF's answers to them, will be published in a Q&A page on

the VREF web site.

Time schedule

(tentative from March onwards)

20 December 2013	Call for Expressions of Interest opens
20 February 2014	Deadline for Expressions of Interest
Mid-March	Selected candidates will be invited to step 2
Mid-April	Deadline for submission of full proposals
Late April/early May	Interviews with candidates
Early May	Proposals reviewed by the VREF Scientific Council
Early June	VREF Board appoints Research Director
June – mid October	Formation of research team and development of project plan
November	VREF Scientific Council reviews the project plan
December	VREF Board decides on project plan and budget for phase 1

N.B. Candidates selected for step 2 must be available for an interview in the second half of April or early May. The interviews will take place in Europe (exact location to be decided later).