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## CLOSURE OF FOTIM

FOTIM (Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis) is a regional academic consortium that has been promoting collaboration between its member institutions since 1996. On 24 July, 2010, the FOTIM Board took the decision to close the organization in its current form. This decision was taken in the light of continuing financial pressures on institutions, the duplication of effort pertaining to activities in the sector and the creation of new national structures such as HESA.

The past few years have been difficult for academic consortia in South Africa. The changes in the higher education sector, the reduction in the number of institutions as a consequence of the mergers, and the difficult financial circumstances experienced by member universities resulted in the decision to close FOTIM.

Since 1996, FOTIM has implemented a number of diverse, successful projects. This has been achieved with the support of its Board, the interest and participation of staff in member institutions, and the enthusiasm of the office staff. In recent years however, the sustainability and cost effectiveness of FOTIM was questioned due to, amongst others, the blurring of organisational identities in the higher education sector and the possibility of unnecessary duplication with other sectoral institutions.

During 2009 the FOTIM Board reviewed the present and anticipated future value and relevance of FOTIM and its activities in the current and future higher education context, and in 2010, the FOTIM Board commissioned an External Review of the organisation, the outcome of which resulted in the decision to close the organisation.

The FOTIM Board will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the three main projects of FOTIM, namely GAELIC, VUMA! Portal and Disability are placed firmly within alternative structures that will house them and, where appropriate, facilitate the expansion of their activities to a national level. The FOTIM Chairperson and Board are working closely with the staff of FOTIM to ensure that this process is finalized during the first quarter of 2011.

Further information and details pertaining to the sustainability of the FOTIM projects, will be made available, as soon as these have been finalised.

Prof Yunus Ballim

FOTIM Chairperson