**A4. Application Summary** (738/750 characters)

Political conflict and food insecurity are intrinsically linked. Conflict disrupts markets, both nationally and internationally, which leads to an enormous loss of welfare as sellers and buyers are unable to capitalize on the efficiencies that markets offer. By destroying physical and social links, conflicts increase the risk of food crises, particularly in marginalized states. Where the state is weak, conflict is more likely. But the weak state often is accompanied by strong informal institutions, which may play a role of a socio-economic buffer. This project will examine the inefficiencies of food markets in regions of Africa and Southeast Asia, and it will create an early warning platform for food crises in times of conflict.

**A5. National Interest Statement** (1329/1500 characters)

Australian policymakers have struggled to understand the political and economic situation in many low- and middle-income countries with high levels of conflict and poor governance. Historically, a lack of access to accurate data has been the main reason for this. Foreign policy heavily relies on a good understanding of internal socio-political affairs in recipient countries. The benefits of the Project will be seen in improved data-driven assessments of political and economic situations, which will allow the Australian government to better target foreign aid and strategic investments, particularly in Southeast Asia and Africa. The Project will contribute to Australia’s science and research priority of “Food” and help to drive economic growth opportunities for primary producers, particularly cereal exporters. The spatiotemporal market integration framework will measure how a country’s institutions facilitate storage and trade in internal and external markets. The price forecasting tool will inform of the risk of food crises and famines, particularly in the wake of internal and external conflicts. The Project will provide greater insight into the dynamics of potential export markets, particularly for major cereals of which Australia is one of the world's leading exporters, in low- and middle-income countries.