Network of ICT experienced organisations, sharing experiences, knowledge and supporting SMEs

Grant Agreement No.225004

Join The Network

5 Knowledge Intensive Networks

a. Technological window for SMEs

b. Corallia - The Hellenic Technology Cluster Initiative

c. Cut-out and welding of metal plates

d. Goonline

e. Network of ICT experienced organizations supporting SME'S

f. eConTec

g. Network-centric Middleware for group communications and resource sharing

h. TT to Agro-Food SMEs sector

i. Implementation of an online Knowledge Management Tool in a Highly Innovative Company

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

PROJECT ACRONYM: NET-SHARE

PROJECT FULL TITLE: NETWORK OF ICT EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS, SHARING EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTING SME'S.

INSTRUMENT: ICT PSP

DURATION: 36 MONTHS

DISSEMINATION LEVEL: PUBLIC

PROJECT COORDINATOR ORGANISATION NAME: Inovamais, S.A.; www.inovamais.pt

PARTNER NAME: *TECNOPOLO S.P.A.*

CONTACT PERSON: *MRS.ANGELA CIANCIA*

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: *"TECHNOLOGICAL WINDOW" FOR SMES*

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: *TECNOPOLO CO-OPERATION MODEL WITH THE ROME CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND 2 CONSORTIUMS FOR TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER*

TARGET GROUP: *SMES*

DATE: *NOVEMBER 2008*

Grant Agreement: 225004

TECNOPOLO S.p.A.

Roma, Italy

Best Practice Presentation

Lyon, ICT event

November 25, 2008

The technological best practice described in this report is not really to be intended as an innovative product or process or tool tested and also used by some final users but rather as a useful working methodology model of a specific organisation conceived for supporting innovative SMEs and also for providing specific innovative services to the same SMEs.

- ***Tecnopolo S.p.A. is a private/public society born in 1996***
- ***The Tecnopolo headquarters is in Rome, with two operational activities localised in the east and south side of Rome***

Tecnopolo S.p.A. is a society participated by the Rome Chamber (95%) and also by the Lazio Region, the Province of Rome and the Municipality of Rome.

Tecnopolo S.p.A. is a great project for Rome aiming at creating the first Roman Science and Technology Park **System.**

The partnerships of Tecnopolo are the following:

- Castel Romano S.p.A. 100%
- Consorzio of Castel Romano 50%
- Consorzio TecnoTiberis 50%
- Consorzio Roma Ricerche 16,66%
- Centro Sviluppo Materiali 16,22%

- *Tecnopolo Mission*
- *Tecnopolo areas for action*

The mission of Tecnopolo is:

- attracting business projects with high technological content for driving and improving the Rome area's industrial development
- responding positively to the unemployment problem particularly intellectual unemployment

The Tecnopolo areas for action

The mission is being implemented via two different industrial/technological projects in terms of vocation and location.

Both benefit from the EU structural interventions earmarked for Objective 2 areas.

TECNOPOLO TIBURTINO

Oriented towards ICT and manufacturing and other industrial activities

TECNOPOLO OF CASTEL ROMANO

Oriented primarily towards research and technology transfer

Tecnopolo basic functions:

- *as facilitator*
- *as service Provider*

The Tecnopolo provides its located companies some specific basic functions both as facilitator and service provider.

As **facilitator** Tecnopolo provides:

- Siting

Organised area with high enviromental quality

Competitive sale/lease pricing, especially for start up

Business incubator

- Technology

Technological transfer knowledge in collaboration with specialized centers and Universities

- Institutional

Relationship with local administrations

As **service provider** Tecnopolo provides:

- Basic infrastructure

Road system

Green spaces

Cogeneration, broad band, photovoltaic plants, grid computing

- Management

A management consortium guarantees an high qualitative environment level and is always dealing with all practical problems regarding the daily life of companies located in the area

- Other services

Conference center

Rooms for meetings

Grant Agreement: 225004

•Tecnopolo S.p.A.“figures”

Some figures about Tecnopolo S.p.A.

➢ ***TECNOPOLO TIBURTINO***

- Total area: 72 ha. (ca. 180 acres) in the “Case Rosse” district
- Buildable volume: 1.5 million cu.m.
- (1,100,000 cu.m. earmarked for industry and 400,000 cu.m. for services)

➢ ***TECNOPOLO OF CASTEL ROMANO***

- Total area: 52 ha. (ca. 130 acres) with high scenic content just south of Rome
- Present built volume: 188,000 cu. m.
- Further buildable volume: 264,000 cu.m. (176 cu.m. for production and 88 cu.m. for services)

Tecnopolo Tiburtino

- *Tecnopolo Tiburtino business sectors*
- *hosted companies*
- *investments*
- *employment*

The Tecnopolo Tiburtino economic sectors:

- **ICT** (Information and Communications Technology)
- **Electeronic-Aerospace** (Galileo Test Range Centre, Tecnopolo candidature for hosting future GSA, Galileo Supervisor Authority)
- **Telecommunication and multimedia**
- **Technological transfer**
- **Incubation Facilities**
- **Training, consulting**

Today, in the Tecnopolo Tiburtino area are hosted more than 65 companies, operating within the economic sectors mentioned before.
More than 300 millions of Euro have been invested up to now for creating new buldings and plants.

More than 800 personnel units are operating within all the companies located in the area.

The 800 units will increase of more than 2000 other units within next year 2009, following the completion of new buildings made directly by the same Tecnopolo or also by other companies.

•Tecnopolo Tiburtino attractive elements

They fundamentally regard:

Environmental quality and services

- green and parks
- cycle tracks and pedestrian ways
- nursery school
- sport centre
- canteen
- link bus with Rome G.R.A.

Technological services provided through

- co-generation system
- photovoltaic plants
- broad band network
- grid computing

Technological transfer services provided from

- Consorzio Roma Ricerche
- Innova SpA

Companies incubator and spin off services from

- BIC Lazio- Itech incubator

- *Tecnopolo of Castel Romano business sectors*
- *Tecnopolo of Castel Romano activities and projects*
- *Tecnopolo of Castel Romano hosted companies and employment index*

The Tecnopolo of Castel Romano business sectors essentially refer to:

- Special materials
- Biotechnology
- Environment
- Business Services Centre and spin off facilities
- Technological transfer

The above mentioned sectors refer to the main activities implemented by the main organisations located in the Castel Romano area:

Material Development Center (Centro Sviluppo Materiali)

The Materials Development Centre is a centre of excellence - one of the major ones in Italy and Europe - for research on metals and special materials.

It has recently diversified into the sectors of aerospace and environment.

ISPRA - Institute for Environmental Protection and Research

The mission is to prepare and test tools and projects for building a model sustainable city.

Biomedical Science Park

An organized system of laboratories, production facilities and related services for research, technology transfer and production of goods and services for human, animal and plant health and well-being.

Technology Park Consortium

The Consortium's overall objective is to promote and manage the transfer of innovative services and new technology to SMEs, thereby encouraging the creation and start-up of new high-tech enterprises in the Rome metropolitan area.

More than 500 personnel units/researchers are operating within all the organisations located in the area.

Other new spaces and buildings are today still available for hosting new research centers and innovative companies.

• *Tecnopolo of Castel Romano attractive elements*

The attractive elements of Castel Romano research area refer to the following:

Environmental quality and services

- equipped areas
- green spaces
- refectory
- link bus with metro

Scientific research

- new materials: M.D.C.
- biotechnologies: Fondazione S.Raffaele di Roma (Rome Chamber – S.Raffaele Milano – Capitalia)
- I.S.P.R.A. (Environment Ministry)

Technological transfer

- Consorzio of Castel Romano (M.D.C., Tecnopolo S.p.A.)

Tecnopolo base principles:

Tecnopolo as a best practice example of local organisation supporting SMEs

The following principles represent the way of working of the whole Tecnopolo structure:

- Flexible organised structures
- Great transparency and coherence in selecting providers and contractors
- Link between the Society "social role" (services for companies) and the principle of profitable initiatives

The Tecnopolo action model as a best practice example of intervention supporting the local innovative SMEs, wishing to innovate their activity and increase their competitiveness on the global market and also as a local organisation providing specific innovative services fort he same SMEs: the "Technological Window" best practice

Tecnopolo S.p.A., together with the Rome Chamber and the two Consortiums Roma Ricerche and Castel Romano, implemented a new service for local Roman SMEs: the "Technological "Window", the first successful experiment implemented by a public institutions local system.

The "Technological Window" is effectively a project of:

- Tecnopolo S.p.A.
- Chamber of Commerce of Rome
- Consorzio Roma Ricerche
- Consorzio Tecnopolo of Castel Romano

Tecnopolo S.p.A. participates in Consorzio Roma Ricerche (16,22%) and Consorzio Tecnopolo di Castel Romano (50%).

The Consorzio Roma Ricerche is a non-profit organisation established in September 1986 oriented towards the promotion and development of Innovation and Technology Transfer to industries in Central Italy, mostly SMEs. It is open to collaboration with Universities, Research Centres, public agencies, high-tech companies as well as SMEs, from Italy and/or from Europe

The Consorzio Tecnopolo of Castel Romano, participated by Tecnopolo and the Materials Development Center (M.D.C.), focuses its activity towards the promotion and development of Innovation and Technology Transfer to SMEs.

Castel Romano is also supported by the Materials Development Centre, the San Raffaele Biomedical Scientific Park Foundation of Rome and Institute for Environmental Protection and Research.

The M.D.C. is a first-rate centre connected to the most qualified national and international partners dealing in Special Materials, Biotechnologies and Environment.

- ***The Tecnopolo "Technological Window" best practice regards effectively the implementation of a Technological Transfer Innovation project/instrument, specifically addressed to the local small companies.***

Through the "Window," the Rome Chamber financially supports Roman SMEs for implementing a consulting technological transfer activity, through the two Consortium of Roma Ricerche and Castel Romano.

The Tecnopolo/Rome Chamber financial contribution is equal to 50% of the consulting expenses, up to € 25.000 per SME.

The financial contribution is given from Tecnopolo/Rome Chamber directly to the two Consortiums providing the technological transfer consulting activity.

The other 50% is paid by the same SME, directly to the Consortium providing the consulting activity.

- *Type of SMEs asking for the technological Transfer service*
- *SMEs economic sectors*

SMEs asking for the innovation and R&S services provided by the "Technological Window" are generally:

- micro and small/medium companies
- most part of companies with 20-50 employees
- production and services main economic sectors
- innovative companies interested in innovating and enlarging their activity on the global market

The SMEs economic sectors asking for the "Technological Window" services particularly referred to:

For Castel Romano projects:

- Production, manufacturing, recycling of no ferrous metals
- Production of rubber products and forms
- Design and production of integrated circuits, systems and prototypes for electronics and TLC
- Design and consulting regarding the implementation and maintenance of industrial plants (petrolchemical and pharmaceutical industry)
- Informatics services, etc.

For Consorzio Roma Ricerche SMEs projects:

- PC and electronics production
- Design and development of HW and SW systems, management SW (payments checking, products distribution, etc.), Health SW
- Innovative systems for telematics technologies, training and marketing
- Providing of informatics and phone equipments
- Engineering services (environmental monitoring, data capture for transports check, certification of road devices)
- Design and development of shelter prototypes (container) for supporting UMTS networks
- Design and production of methodologies for micro-biological environmental analysis
- Development of products and equipments for the spreading of scientific topics, etc.

- ***SMEs main and general projects intervention areas***

SMEs general and main projects intervention areas generally regard,

for Consorzio Castel Romano:

- Design engineering
- Industrial engineering
- Home-building engineering
- Environment engineering
- Chemical engineering
- New materials engineering
- Informatics engineering
- Aerospace engineering
- Mechanics engineering
- Medicine, etc.

for Consorzio Roma Ricerche:

- Informatics engineering
- Communication, multimedia and performances engineering
- Audiovisual engineering
- Technological services engineering (SW for companies)
- Environmental and energy engineering
- Industrial engineering
- Optics, etc.

- ***SMEs technological transfer type of projects/best practices***

All SMEs projects cofinanced through the assistance of the Consorzio Roma Ricerche and/or the Consorzio Tecnopolo of Castel Romano produced effective innovative practical projetcs as well as some good examples of best practices to circulate and disseminate towards other SMEs.

For Castel Romano SMEs projects:

- Innovative prototype for new process parameters regarding the rubbish combustion
- Innovative system for the protection of piling building
- Innovative SW for the integrated management of job orders
- Innovative equipment for preparing the mix of liquid hydrocarbon (aerospace)
- Innovative system for measuring the mechanism usage
- Innovative materials for protecting the overing of road tunnels
- Innovative methodologies for increasing the materials endurance
- Etc.

For Consorzio Roma Ricerche SMEs projects:

- Design of control and monitoring systems
- Design and implementation of SW and informatics prototypes
- Development framework for the dynamic management of web contents
- Images production
- Sistems of vocal synthesis
- Prototypes of SW and embedded units
- Cultural web services
- Waterwheel aeolian prototyps
- e-business intelligence applications
- Cooling and heating systems
- Cinema industrial prototypes (from 3D to 2D images), through the grid computing, etc.

- Etc.

• *SMEs projects ways of selection*

• *SMEs and service promoters link instruments*

The selection of the innovative project is focused on the following main principles:

- Project innovation “rate”
- Process or product innovations able to “innovate” the company and also the market
- Exhisting prototypes to be transformed in useful products to be used and commercialized

The following instruments have been used by the same “Technological Window” promoters for promoting and disseminating the initiative information:

- Rome Chamber magazine “RomaCreaNotizie”
- Tecnopolo, Rome Chamber and participants consortiums web sites
- Rome Chamber C.R.M. platform
- “Pass the word”…

• *SMEs projects results*

The following outputs has been produced and highlighted for all SMEs participated to the “Technological Window”:

- Public financial support of innovative activities useful especially for companies lacking of correspondent financial resources
- Specific support provided to SMEs by R&S specialized organisations
- Specific opportunity given to SMEs by local public organisations
- Creation of innovative products to be introduced within the global market
- Opportunity for commercializing exhisting products prototypes
- Providing innovative methodologies, products and techniques from SMEs to big public and private organisations
- Production costs decrease
- Increasing of products safety and reliability
- Increasing of health products safety
- Increasing of products and methodologies aiming at improving SMEs links with other companies and the global market
- Increasing of SMEs activities and products environmental value
- Increasing of SMEs competitiveness on global market

- ***Projects results for the service promoters***

The project result also highlighted a real advantage for the same service promoters, particularly referred to the following success elements:

- Providing an innovative and useful service to local SMEs
- Providing an effective financial support for SMEs
- Providing an innovative public/private service useful for increasing the SMEs competitiveness
- Increasing the reliability and fidelisation between SMEs and promoter public organisations
- Pushing the interest of public and private organisations regarding the implementation of this kind of activities towards SMEs
- New projects proposed every year by new companies interested in the "Technological Window" activities and its financial contributions

Anyway, the main and most important result has been the creation of a successful public/private co-operation model/best practice aiming at supporting the local SMEs interested in R&S and Innovation activity.

- *Projects "figures"*
- *Promoters financial investment entity*
- *Project future expectations*

From 2002 to 2008 Tecnopolo/Rome Chamber, together with support of the specialized Consortiums, cofinanced:

- Tecnopolo Castel Romano: Projects n.32
- Consorzio Roma Ricerche: Projects n.49
- Total projects 81
- From 2002 to 2008: financial contributions approved € 2.025.000
- Average financial contribution/per SME: € 20-25.000
- Most part of approved projects regarding Informatics and Environment/Energy sector

The Tecnopolo, together with the Rome Chamber and the two Consortiums of Roma Ricerche and Castel Romano will keep on implementing the "Technological Window" service for local Roman SMEs, addressing also for the next year 2009 specific financial resources to the increasing of R&S, Innovation and Technological Transfer activities.

- ***Other Tecnopolo and Lazio Region actions for financially supporting the R&S and Innovation SMEs projects:***

  the TecnoTiberis projects - Action II.5.2 P.O.R.Lazio 2000-2006

Tecnopolo S.p.A., in the recent past three years and also through the TecnoTiberis Consortium (whose partners are the Tecnopolo and the Consorzio Roma Ricerche) launched the “Action R&S and Technological Transfer within the Excellence Poles”, co-financed by the F.E.S.R. POR Lazio Region 2000-2006 Action n.II.5.2, aiming at supporting the technological transfer in the Lazio Region SMEs, ob.2 area.
The project is now completed and all the results are being evaluating by the Lazio Region.

The TecnoTiberis project generally followed the scheme of the “Technological Window”, even if in certain cases a certain difference has to be underlined:

- the “Technological Window” projects are implemented through the consulting assistance of the two specialized research consortiums, taking into account an already SME exhisting project
- the TecnoTiberis projects are generally implemented following a previous feasibility evaluation and the implementation of the SMEs innnovative prototype project, directly by the same TecnoTiberis.

The TecnoTiberis projects – Action II.5.2:

- *technological providers*
- *SMEs financial contributions*

Some examples of Action II.5.2 technological providers:

- **CNR – IFN -** Istituto di Fotonica e Nanotecnologie del CNR
- **CNR – IMM -** Istituto per la Microelettronica e i Microsistemi del CNR
- **CNR – ISM -** Istituto di Struttura della Materia del CNR
- **CRR -** Consorzio Roma Ricerche
- **Distretto ICT -** Distretto dell'audiovisivo e dell'ICT di Roma
- **Innova -** INNOVA S.p.A
- **La Sapienza – DIAA -** Univ. La Sapienza - Dip. di Ingegneria Aerospaziale e Astronautica
- **RomaTre – DIA -** Università Roma Tre - Dipartimento di Informatica e Automazione
- **RomaTre – DIMI -** Univ. Roma Tre -Dipartimento di Ingegneria Meccanica e Industriale
- **RomaTre GIS-GPS -** Università Roma TRE – Dip. Scienze Geologiche Lab. GIS – GPS
- **TV ING -** Univ. Tor Vergata Fac. di Ingegneria, Centro per la gestione dei Servizi

Some information about Action II.5.2 amounts and SMEs contributions:

- the action n.II.5.2 provided a financial contribution up to 75% of total costs
- ex.Project cost: € 100.000
- contribution amount: € 75.000
- costs for SME: € 25.000

A second similar action is being approved by the Lazio Region for implementing a new similar R&S and Innovation activity during the next 3 years.

The economic sectors to be taken into account will be in particular: ICT, Aerospace, Biotech, Cultural Services.

Besides the Tecnopolo, partners will be also the Biomedical Science Park, the ICT-Audiovisual District and so many others experts in the action economic sectors.

The Tecnopolo is finally an organisation:

- to be intended as a working best practice model
- interested in promoting the development of SMEs innovative best practices through specific actions specifically conceived
- effectively ready to spread and disseminate all the best practices developed through the same above mentioned specific actions towards other European SMEs interested in
- effectively ready to spread and disseminate other useful and innovative European best practices towards its local SMEs

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

PROJECT ACRONYM: NET-SHARE

PROJECT FULL TITLE: NETWORK OF ICT EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS, SHARING EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTING SME'S.

INSTRUMENT: ICT PSP

DURATION: 36 MONTHS

DISSEMINATION LEVEL: PUBLIC

PROJECT COORDINATOR ORGANISATION NAME: Inovamais, S.A.; www.inovamais.pt

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PARTNER NAME: ATLANTIS CONSULTING S.A

CONTACT PERSON: Christodoulos Keratidis

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: CORALLIA – THE HELLENIC TECHNOLOGY CLUSTERS INITIATIVE

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: GREECE

TARGET GROUP: SMES

DATE: JUNE/2009

INSERT A DESCRIPTION ACCORDINGLY TO THE SLIDE

Good Practice
Greek Microelectronics Cluster

Corallia – the Hellenic Technology Clusters Initiative

- Public-private partnership;
- Aims at boosting competitiveness, entrepreneurship and innovation, in knowledge-intensive and exports-oriented technology segments

Corallia – the Hellenic Technology Clusters Initiative

- Portrays the mutual vision of all innovation ecosystem actors, including industry, academia, research labs, VCs, business angels, regional and central government;

- Co-financed by Structural Funds (Operational Programme“Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship”

Actions:

- Acts as a one-stop-shop, through which the entire innovation network gain access to unique business opportunities and added-value services;

- Supports new venture creation, where students and entrepreneurs “to be” can apply innovative ideas and set-up start-ups.

Actions:

- Expands the innovation-knowledge horizon with a thorough training program, through which members of the clusters gain best-in-class on topics ranging from technical skills on project management, to negotiation tactics and business plan development;

- Eases the innovation gap through complementarities and partnerships among cluster-members as well as between cluster-members and national and international organizations, including world-class innovation centres of excellence, in Europe, USA, Japan.

Actions:

- Sponsors actions to establish strong ties with universities and research centres, in order to enhance technology transfer and R&D commercialization
- Provides incentives for VCs and Business Angels to invest especially at the early stages by creating a favorable environment
- Leverages the top-tier Hellenic human capital, and promotes the “Innovation Made in Greece” branding

Mi-Cluster:

- Sector: Microelectronics & Embedded Systems
- First innovation cluster ever formed in Greece
- 70 Enterprises, 3 Research Departments of Corporates, 36 University and Reserach Centre Departments

Results of pilot phase (2006-2008):

- Indicators
  - Turnover: +60%
  - Exports: +110%
  - Employment: +93%
  - Patents: +213%

Funding Programme (2009-2013):

- "Hellenic Technology Clusters in Microelectronics – Phase-2"
- Available public financing: 33m € (national and European (ERDF) funds)
- Co-financing in the form of grants

Funding Programme (2009-2013) – Action lines:

1. "Seed-financing" type of grants to aid the creation of new innovative enterprises
2. Implementation of state-of-the-art R&D cooperative projects
3. VC investment-backed R&D
4. Horizontal action line consisting of a set of all-round business development and innovation-support aid measures

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

PROJECT ACRONYM: NET-SHARE

PROJECT FULL TITLE: NETWORK OF ICT EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS, SHARING EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTING SME'S.

INSTRUMENT: ICT PSP

DURATION: 36 MONTHS

DISSEMINATION LEVEL: PUBLIC

PROJECT COORDINATOR ORGANISATION NAME: Inovamais, S.A.; www.inovamais.pt

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PARTNER NAME: APPLIED RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS FUND

CONTACT PERSON: DENITSA MARINOVA

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: INTEGRATED COMPLEX FOR HIGH-TEMPERATURE CUT-OUT AND WELDING OF METAL PLATES WITH A TRAINING LABORATORY

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: BULGARIAN CLUSTER OF MECHATRONICS AND AUTOMATION

TARGET GROUP: ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIELD OF MECHATRONICS, AUTOMATION, ELECTRONIC, INFORMATICS

DATE: OCTOBER 2008

INTRODUCTION

- **About the M & A Cluster:**
- established at the end of 2006
- exports high-tech products to EU, USA, Asia, South America
- members:
  - 10 high-tech companies
  - 2 research institutes of BAS
  - 1 Technical University
  - 2 branch associations and a TT organization

  (instrument-building, electronics, informatics and mechatronics)
- regionally based

  (city of Blagoevgrad, South West region of Bulgaria)

  with national coverage

INTRODUCTION

About the Cluster

The Mechatronics and Automation Cluster is one of the newest clusters in Bulgaria established at the end of 2006. The cluster's high-tech products are designed mainly for export to a range of European countries (Germany, France, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain) as well as the United States, China, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, India, Brazil and Mexico.

Members of the cluster are 10 high-tech companies, 2 research institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1 Technical University, 2 branch associations and a technology transfer organization, operating in the field of instrument-building, electronics, informatics and mechatronics.

The cluster was established in Blagoevgrad (South West region of Bulgaria) due to the good infrastructure available and the strong support of the regional authorities for the cluster's successful operation.

Despite being regionally located the cluster has the ambition to be of national coverage by providing services to other companies and educating young professionals and scholars.

INTRODUCTION

- **List of Members:**
- **Companies:**
  - **Vaniko Ltd. – leading representative of the Cluster**
  - **Spesima Engineering Ltd.**
  - **Robotica Ltd.**
  - **Kristian-Deni JSC**
  - **Intelligent Security Systems Ltd.**
  - **Semis JSC**
  - **EN Marvel Engineering Ltd.**
  - **Chitta Commerce Ltd**
  - **Saturn Engineering Ltd.**
  - **Stratex Ltd. (Sofia)**
- **Research institutes and universities:**
  - **Institute of Mechanics, Bulgarian Academy of Science**
  - **Central Laboratory of Mechatronics and Instrument-building, BAS**
  - **Dept. of Instrument-building, Technical University – Sofia**
- **Branch associations and TT organization:**
  - **GIS–Transfer Center Foundation, member of Enterprise Europe Network**
  - **Bulgarian Industrial Association**
  - **Automatics and Informatics Union**

Members of the Mechatronics and Automation Cluster:

Companies:

Vaniko Ltd. (Blagoevgrad) – leading representative of the Cluster
Spesima Engineering Ltd. (Bulgarian-German company in partnership with “Oskar Frech”)
Robotica Ltd. (Velingrad)
Kristian-Deni JSC (Blagoevgrad)
Intelligent Security Systems Ltd. (Vratsa)
Semis JSC (Sofia)
EN Marvel Engineering Ltd. (Sofia)
Chitta Commerce Ltd.(Sofia)
Saturn Engineering Ltd. (Sofia) – awarded the 1st price of the National Contest “Most Innovative SME” for 2006
Stratex Ltd. (Sofia)

Research institutes and universities:

Institute of Mechanics, Bulgarian Academy of Science
Central Laboratory of Mechatronics and Instrument-building, BAS
Dept. of Instrument-building, Technical University – Sofia

Branch associations and technology transfer organization:

GIS–Transfer Center Foundation, member of Enterprise Europe Network
Bulgarian Industrial Association
Automatics and Informatics Union

INTRODUCTION

- **External consultants to M & A Cluster:**
- Dutch company for technical support **"ECORYS"** – monitors and evaluates the quality of the cluster's activities;
- consultant company **"BD Berater"** – evaluates competitiveness in products development & participation in Structural Funds' projects;
- **ARC Fund** – consults in proposal development on Technology Park in Energy Efficiency (Structural Funds)

The cluster receives **external consultancy by 3 organizations:**

- the Dutch company for technical support "ECORYS" – monitors and evaluates the quality of the cluster's activities;
- the consultant company "BD Berater" – evaluates the potential of the cluster members in competitive products' development and successful participation in Structural Funds' projects;
- ARC Fund – consults the cluster in proposal development on Technology Park in the field of Energy Efficiency to be financed by the Structural Funds.

INTRODUCTION

- **“ECORYS”:** the M & A Cluster has the prerequisites to be successful and to serve as example for **good practice of clusterisation in Bulgaria:**
  - entrepreneurship culture
  - strong networks and partnerships
  - good innovation base
  - appropriate infrastructure
  - participation of big companies
  - access to financing sources

According to “ECORYS” the Mechatronics and Automation Cluster has all the prerequisites to be successful and to serve as example for good practice of clusterisation in Bulgaria:

- entrepreneurship culture
- strong networks and partnerships
- good innovation base
- appropriate infrastructure
- participation of big companies
- access to financing sources

The first prototype of innovative product **“*Integrated complex for high-temperature cut-out and welding of metal plates with a training laboratory*”** created by the cluster is ready to be put in operation by the end of this year.

Grant Agreement: 225004

DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

- ***Integrated complex for high-temperature cut-out and welding of metal plates with a training laboratory***
- innovative product developed by M & A cluster
- under a contract with the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy and Energy financed within the PHARE Programme
- ***Main developers:***
- Spesima Ltd. - Sofia
  - produces & exports robots for over 30 countries, cooperates with the German company Oskar Flech
- Vaniko Ltd. – Blagoevgrad
  - collaborates with SKF company Sweden, one of the leaders in mechatronics

DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

Integrated complex for high-temperature cut-out and welding of metal plates with a training laboratory

The Integrated Complex (IC) is an innovative product developed by the Bulgarian Cluster of Mechatronics and Automation under a contract with the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy and Energy financed within the PHARE Programme. The main developers of the product are the companies Spesima Ltd. located in Sofia and Vaniko Ltd. located in Blagoevgrad.

The Spesima company exports robots for over 30 countries worldwide. The firm is cooperating with the German company Oskar Flech which is a world leader in the production of machines for casting of aluminum alloy. The robots are fully designed by Spesima – from the idea for the robot to the metal construction and the software – all is product of the Bulgarian specialists.

The Vaniko company, which premises are located in Blagoevgrad (South West of Bulgaria) works in collaboration with the SKF company Sweden, one of the leaders in mechatronics.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

- **Integrated Complex - Spesima participation**:
- assembling the system for gas-flame and plasma cut-out of metal plates with:
  - gauge of 1 to 100 mm, maximum dimensions of 2500 x 6000 mm and accuracy of 0,5 mm of the produced parts
- designing 4 axes navigation microprocessor system operating by receiving feedbacks on the current's position and intensity through N-coders, inductive, infrared and capacitive sensors
- applying optimal solutions in mechanics, software and hardware for increased precision of the performed motions and for accuracy in positioning.
- The operation data of the Integrated Complex can be transferred electronically or be remotely used via internet.

Within the Integrated Complex project Spesima is responsible for assembling the system for gas-flame and plasma cut-out of metal plates with gauge of 1 to 100 mm, maximum dimensions of 2500 x 6000 mm and accuracy of 0,5 mm of the produced parts. The 4 axes navigation microprocessor system operates by receiving feedbacks on the current's position and intensity through N-coders, inductive, infrared and capacitive sensors. Some optimal solutions in mechanics, software and hardware are applied for increased precision of the performed motions and for accuracy in positioning. The operation data of the Integrated Complex can be transferred electronically or be remotely used via internet. Thus the complex can be of service to clients outside the capital city.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

- **Integrated Complex - Vaniko participation:**
- assembling the system for plasma welding of worn out expensive parts of machinery and industrial equipment
- designing 4 axes CNC-navigation with embedded plasma source
- hosting the Laboratory for education and vocational training on the Integrated Complex
  - equipped with the advanced computer system combining standard and originally developed software for projecting and manufacturing of machine parts with the Integrated Complex.

Vaniko company is responsible for assembling the system for plasma welding of worn out expensive parts of machinery and industrial equipment. The system has 4 axes CNC-navigation with embedded plasma source.

The city of Blagoevgrad will also host the laboratory for education and vocational training on the Integrated Complex. The laboratory will provide opportunity for training and stages of scholars from technical colleges of mechatronics and robotics and young specialists from the companies in the Mechatronics and Automation Cluster. The Laboratory will be equipped with the advanced computer system combining standard and originally developed software for projecting and manufacturing of machine parts with the Integrated Complex.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

- Some milestones:
- September 2008 - the project on the Integrated Complex development has successfully passed its 6-months monitoring period
- December 2008 - start of the Complex at its both sites in Sofia and Blagoevgrad
- 2009 – participation of M & A Cluster with stand in the International Exhibition on Mechatronics in Munich

In September 2008 the project on the Integrated Complex development has successfully passed its 6-months monitoring period.

In December 2008 the start of the Complex at its both sites in Sofia and Blagoevgrad is expected.

In 2009 the Cluster plans to participate with stand in the International Exhibition on Mechatronics in Munich.

BENEFITS FOR THE USERS

- **Cluster members:**
- increasing and diversifying their production capacity
- providing base for future innovative products and services
- facilitating national and international cooperation
- attracting and training young professionals
- ensuring financial sustainability & new investments Energy Efficiency

- **Other organizations:**
- technical support for specific manufactory processes
- exchanging know-how, broadening products assortments and clients networks
- upgrading personnel skills
- attracting investments in the region

BENEFITS FOR THE USERS

The Integrated Complex creates competitive advantages for cluster members by:

- increasing and diversifying their production capacity;
- providing base for future innovative products and services;
- facilitating national and international cooperation for implementing innovative projects;
- attracting and training young professionals;
- ensuring financial sustainability of the cluster and investments in new sectors such as Energy Efficiency.

Companies and research organizations beyond the cluster will also benefit from the Integrated Complex and the Laboratory for education and training by:

- receiving technical support in implementation of specific manufactory processes;
- exchanging know-how, broadening products assortments and clients networks;
- upgrading personnel skills;
- attracting investments in the region.

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

PROJECT ACRONYM: NET-SHARE

PROJECT FULL TITLE: NETWORK OF ICT EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS, SHARING EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTING SME'S.

INSTRUMENT: ICT PSP

DURATION: 36 MONTHS

DISSEMINATION LEVEL: PUBLIC

PROJECT COORDINATOR ORGANISATION NAME: Inovamais, S.A.; www.inovamais.pt

PARTNER NAME: GREEK RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY NETWORK (GRNET SA)

CONTACT PERSON: XENOPHON TSILIBARIS

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: TRAINING SUPPORT OF THE GOONLINE PROGRAMME

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: GRNET SA

TARGET GROUP: SMES< 10 EMPLOYEES

DATE: OCTOBER 2008

INTRODUCTION

- For the purposes of Go-online, Greek SMEs were classified into three main categories:
- Computer-illiterate enterprises with no IT infrastructure (i.e. hardware and software) to connect to the Internet.
- Computer-literate enterprises with access to the Internet and an active e-mail account.
- Computer literate enterprises, operating a web site enabling electronic transactions with customers and/or suppliers (B2C and B2B).

The Policy and its Context Go-Online is a joint Action Line of the Operational Programmes 'Information Society' and 'Competitiveness' both funded by the 3rd Community Support Framework (CSF) of the European Union for Greece over the period 2000-2005. Go-Online has been implemented as part of the European Go Digital initiative aiming to familiarise Greek SMEs with ICTs and the Internet.

Its main objective has been to increase the ICT literacy of the very small and medium sized enterprises (vSMEs) and to enhance their e-business awareness and readiness. The particular focus on the specific target group (the very small enterprises with less than 10 employees) stems from the fact that they represent approximately 91 per cent of all enterprises in the country with up to 1000 employees.

Grant Agreement: 225004

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES I

- Based on the above classification, the Go-online Programme consists of two interrelated but separately administered activities
- The first activity provides financial support to SMEs of the categories above of up to 40% of the total cost of purchase of either of the two IT equipment baskets that form the subject of the grant (see Exhibit 1.1).
- Total budget allocated to this activity amounts to 44 million Euros.

PROGRAMME OFFERING

. Type of Basket	Services covered
Basket 1 (addressed to vSMEs of Category 1)	• Purchase of basic terminal equipment (Desktop PC, office automation software, printer) • Internet access for two years • Technical support for 3 years
Basket 2 (addressed to vSMEs of Category 2)	• Domain Name • Development of commercial web site • Maintenance and virtual hosting for two years • Technical support for 3 years

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES II

- The second activity provides educational and training support to vSMEs. Total budget allocated to this activity amounts to 22.360.638,02 Euros. No financial contribution on the part of participating vSMEs is expected.
- The Training Support Scheme has been running in parallel to the Financial Support Scheme since 2002, having its own target objectives and following similar selection criteria for participation (see also section on Implementation and Communication).
- The Scheme covers the full cost of ICTs training for the vSMEs. The target set by the Go-Online Training Support Scheme, given the available budget, is for 50,000 vSMEs to be trained in ICTs by the end of the Programme (i.e. mid-2007).
- This figure translates into 10% of the Greek vSMEs' population being acquainted with ICTs and/or applying e-business practices by the end of this period.

PROGRAMME OFFERING

Action	Services covered	Implementing body
Action 1	Design and implementation of multimedia educational material on line on e-business practices etc Set up, operation, and management of a web-based portal (the Go-Online portal) for continuous information & support Help-Desk	One consortium of academic establishments responsible for the running of this action across the country
Action 2	In-site training and support at SMEs' premises by specially trained e-business consultants. It includes 3 x 4 hour visits by trained e-business consultants who Install and set up the terminal equipment and Internet connection Provide training to personnel on Internet use, e-mail, and e-government services. (This does not include the training provided by the equipment supplier	16 regional consortia each responsible for a specific region of the country

BENEFICIARIES

- The target number of SMEs that could benefit from the Programme derived from dividing the budget of Phase 1 (44 million Euros) with the amount of subsidised expenses credited to each participating vSME (1750 Euros). This resulted to an estimated number of vSMEs beneficiaries of approximately 25,000.

- Phase II started in late April 2005 and lasted until mid-2007. Total budget of Phase II comes up to 50.212.505 Euros and the target for this phase of the Programme is to reach another 16,000 SMEs. The amount of subsidy received has increased to 1250 Euros. This increase has been due to a change in policy that now calls for faster take up of the available financial resources (see also section on Policy Outputs). The amount of 1250 Euros corresponds to 40% of the maximum expenses that can be endured by an SME, which have now increased to 3.125 Euros.

- Apart from the size of the subsidy received, there are a few other equally significant differences between Phase I and Phase II of Go-Online.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In Phase I, eligible for participation to Go-Online were vSMEs that conformed to the following criteria:

- Fit in categories specified above,
- Employed up to ten persons and their annual turnover is up to 600.000 Euros.
- Had been active for at least a year at the time of submitting the application form (annual turnover)
- Belonged to one of the following sectors: Manufacturing, Construction, Wholesale and retail trade, Services (Hotel and catering services, and other service provision activities). These categories account for nearly 100% of the total vSMEs universe and were selected as most typical for this type of firms.
- The sector of activity should not be included in those sectors excluded by EU regulations from financial support
- Applicant vSMEs should conform to the de minimis provisions

- The Go-online Programme was originally conceived at the Ministry of Development and then passed on for implementation to the Secretariat for the Information Society, Ministry of Economics and the General Secretariat for Research and Technology, Ministry of Development. The implementing authorities of Go-Online are:

- The Hellenic Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Handicraft SA (EOMMEX SA). EOMMEX operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Development and has been responsible for the administration and management of the Financial Support Scheme.

- The Greek Research and Technology Network SA (GRNET SA). GRNET operates under the supervision of the General Secretariat for Research and Technology and has been responsible for the administration and management of the Training Support Scheme.

The Training Support Scheme, in particular, has been assigned to 17 regional consortia consisting of academic and technological institutions located in different parts of the country, regional Chambers of Commerce, private consultancy companies etc.

Members of these consortia are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of ICT training at vSMEs' premises.

One consortium has been assigned with the task of setting up the educational material, operating the helpdesk, as well as developing, operating and maintaining the Go-Online portal: www.goonline.gr.

KEY PROCESSES

- Go-Online established many value creating partnerships, within the regions' academic and trade institutions, but also with "suppliers" like e-banking providers.
- Regional and local focus to take into consideration the local needs.
- Half-yearly information and practice exchange between regions
- Professional development of a national-wide network of e-business consultants that offered the on-site training to SMEs
- Continuous Interaction with the Go-online Programme.
- Feedback from the stakeholders and intensive day to day communication with the consortia were undertaken, in the early phase, for improvement purposes.
- Detailed descriptions of core processes (e.g. training) are laid down in a manual.

The partnerships are a positive example for the use of synergies and for the sharing of resources and knowledge, e.g. through the regional promotion of the programme through the Chamber of Commerce.

Programme set wide targets for actors - regions, trainers with regard to qualitative indicators (e.g. level of "customer satisfaction" etc.). However more detailed description of quality and performance indicators should be laid down for the consortia agreement/DOW in future initiatives.

Train-the-trainer sessions gathered communication feedback and valuable information to update the services.

It turned out that smaller consortia may be more suitable to the purpose as it is difficult to manage big ones.

Direct personal communication between the trainers

and the SMEs, played a crucial role for the on-going improvement of implementing the programme.

Grant Agreement: 225004

POLICY AND STRATEGY

- Some specific and major application areas were selected together with industry partners (tax/fiscal, e-mail, e-banking).
- There was intensive regard of local situations and actors. Local relationships are generated, respectively supported (SME/trainer/consultants) with the intention to create a sustainable e-business community.
- The design to make use of available competencies and to address the targeted beneficiaries is well cascaded to local clients, using synergies with Chambers of Commerce and other stakeholders.

The programme follows EU policy / national policy. Policy and Str are based on the present and future needs of the stakeholders

A structured and methodological assessment of the e-business training needs of target groups is underway.

A strategic vision for an effective implementation of future actions i being worked out currently. It is focusing to specific e-bus competencies or to training standards and includes measurable indicators.

Further utilisation of the existing training network, extending it to regional university-industry technology transfer networks, is als option.

PROGRAMME ADAPTATION TO EVOLVING NEEDS

- Implementation is based on information from performance measurement, research, learning and external related activities
- GRNET studied worldwide existing comparable programmes and sought to exchange information with them.
- The communication with Chambers of Commerce and the involvement of young professionals from regions are a good example of mutual interest design.
- Policy and Strategy are developed, reviewed and updated. Continuous experience and feedback information is available from the trainers and the beneficiaries through structured online questionnaires.
- In addition, consideration of good practices and exchanges or structured feedbacks from regions was constantly sought after to encourage regional consortia to adjust to project's evolving needs (e.g. be entitled or obliged to take part in improvement activities).

The first one year of project implementation served as a pilot required to improve the full scale implementation.

A continuous update for topics with a quick change to im performance was underway also using ad-hoc half-yearly techn assessments or feedback seminars etc

(The use of feedback information and strategy check results des though a more structured approach for strategy change when requ

The contracts with subcontractors and regional consortia fo generic changes in the content and structure of the services as a of prevailing circumstances change. Given that potential subjects c conditions for change are laid down in the DOW could result to no to amend contracts (e.g. through the decision of a co-ordination or similar).

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

- Measures to reduce the bureaucracy to coordinate large consortia were successfully undertaken.
- The MIS is a considerable strength, making project progress transparent to all involved parties and serving as a good tool to monitor contractual obligations which are base for financial transactions.
- The project website www.goonline.gr demonstrates professional competency and trust to all consortia, beneficiaries and other stakeholders of the project.
- It also gives the basis for interaction (and it was e.g. used for the online questionnaires as an initial application for the trained clients).

The customer relationships are well managed through consortia and MIS, although indirectly to the beneficiaries.

Mechanisms to reduce financial risks for the regional contractors, such as splitting-up of financing between fixed and direct training related costs were put in place.

Financial auditing was regularly executed assuring a clear and undisturbed role allocation between GRNET and the regional consortia.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- The overall impact of the programme on e-business use from the target group and related quantitative results are well covered in 2 multi annual studies.
- The majority of small businesess found the opportunity through the programme to purchase IT infrastructure at low cost kai get some basic trainining on aspects related to IT-enable business.
- SMEs that were reluctant initially to embark in e-business, realized the potential to become more efficinet and custom oriented.
- Technofobia, particularly predoninant ini small businesses was addressed effectively and SMEs became more IT friendly.

Well run programme that comprehensively measured and achieve tangible results with respect to the key elements of its initial policy and strategy

Future improvements include regional focus groups, including beneficiaries feedback, e.g. through in-depths interviews/meetings as a stimulus for a continuous improvement and a fine-tuning of services.

Online-questionnaires not only for monitoring of service perception, but also for improving it in short term cycles and an regional base.

GRNET is also to take into consideration utilisation of results of other countries in business sectors to focus potential future programmes.

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

PROJECT ACRONYM: NET-SHARE

PROJECT FULL TITLE: NETWORK OF ICT EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS, SHARING EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTING SME'S.

INSTRUMENT: ICT PSP

DURATION: 36 MONTHS

DISSEMINATION LEVEL: PUBLIC

PROJECT COORDINATOR ORGANISATION NAME: Inovamais, S.A.; www.inovamais.pt

PARTNER NAME: GREEK RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY NETWORK (GRNET SA)

CONTACT PERSON: XENOPHON TSILIBARIS

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: "ENHANCING THE COOPERATION BETWEEN ICT SUPPLIERS AND SMES IN CRETE, GREECE"

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: GRNET SA

TARGET GROUP: SMES< 10 EMPLOYEES

DATE: NOVEMEBER 2009

INTRODUCTION

- The project introduces working relationships between local ICT suppliers and SMEs customers and facilitates exchange of experiences about e-business technology and processes.
- In fact the ICT supplier community will be enabled to develop hands-on experience in designing and implementing solutions as well as service delivery models for local SMEs in order for them to improve their standing in ripping the benefits of on-line business practices.
- The project will provide a platform for ICT suppliers and SMEs to interact with each other and to gain knowledge about how best the former can address their customer needs.

The factors that might hinder or encourage the proposed target SME group to decide to invest in ICT as function of the business capacities of the local ICT suppliers, are basically the following:

- ✓ *General economic conditions*
- ✓ *Limited availability for affordable technical support for SMEs to maintain and upgrade ICT systems*
- ✓ *Low levels of strategic understanding of ICT from both local ICT suppliers and SMEs*
- ✓ *Lack from local ICT suppliers input into provision of ICTrelated information and training*
- ✓ *ICT suppliers are likely to be biased towards technical rather than business solutions*

In particular, the target groups participating in the project are expected to work out ways to overcome the aforementioned problems and improve their capacities and capabilities in the following domains:

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

- The project takes place in Crete, Greece and focuses on regional ICT suppliers and SMEs. It consists of 5 main activities (Work Packages), namely: **WP1: Project management, WP2: Selection of ICT suppliers and SMEs, WP3: Preparation of Support Activities, WP4: Implementation of Support Activities and WP5: Dissemination of results.**
- **WP1** deals with the overall project management, **WP 2** deals with the defiinition of the selection critiria and the selection process for selecting ICT suppliers and SMEs to participate to the various activities of the project, **WP3** deals with the preparation and logistics of the main project activities, **WP4** deals with the implementation of 3 separate and distinct activities that **form the essential part of the project work: 1) pilot projects** where prototypes of particular ICT/e-business solutions **offered at no cost** by the suppliers, will be installed **as demos** at 10 SMEs premises **free of charge**, **2) an e-business show** (a 3-days event) will become available to SMEs, ICT Suppliers and Press where various ICTs/e-business solutions are to be exhibited, **3) the open fora** consisting of a series of panel discussions on concrete problems that the ICT business/SME world now faces regarding the commercialization of e-business technology. **WP5** deals with the organization of **4 awareness events** (1 in Cyprus) and production/dissemination of information regarding the project.

SMEs that participate in the project will position themselves to:

- **Streamlining Business Processes**
- **Knowledge and skills levels, information, networking and best practice awareness.**
- **Transforming Business Processes**
- **Supply Chain Factors**
- **Experimentation with modern ICT technologies (Knowledge Management, Wi-Fi, IP telephony)**

SMEs that DO NOT NOT participate in the project:

- ✓ Raise their e-business awareness

ICT Suppliers that participate in the project will acquire valuable experience on how to deliver added value to their customers an to adapt their business models towards meeting the particular needs of the SME market.

ICT Suppliers that do not participate in the project will raise awareness about tapping the e-business market potential.

BENEFICIARIES

I. SMEs with up to ten employees based in the island of Crete

- The SMEs to participate in the project are based in Crete and will be drawn from the ranks of those that have been participated already in the Goonline Programme (more than 22.000). These SMEs will be covering the manufacturing (15,49%), construction (5,61%), trade &commerce (51,50%) as well service industries (27,41%), in order to better demonstrate the availability and usability of technologies/services in a broad range of operational applications. *The selection of the region of Crete has been decided upon the factors of Physical, Social and Human Capital, explained in detail in section I Sustainability and in particular Institutional Sustainability.*

ICT suppliers based in the island of Crete

- an adequate number of ISP providers and hw & sw suppliers are based in Crete as its dynamic economy and vibrant universities and research centres have enabled the growth of new economy sectors with the most prominent being this of ICT, i.e. Forthnet, one of the major ISPs in Greece initially started as spin-off in Crete.

An ICT diagnostic test is conducted giving strategic advice to the selected SMEs in the form of an action plan. Once the latter has been drawn up, a matching mechanism is being applied in order to identify the most appropriate ICT supplier. The final outcome is a set of 10 pilot projects where prototypes of particular **ICT/e-business solutions offered at no cost** by the ICT suppliers, are installed **as demos** at the SMEs premises **free of charge**.

An e-business show (1 or 2-days event) is being also set up in a dedicated space , equipped with the latest high-tech communication applications such as a wireless LAN, smartboards, videoconferencing and a set of e-business technology demos. It is open to all SMEs and deal with different levels of adoption of ICTs. Access is being reserved for SMEs, ICT Suppliers and Press, by prior registration/invitation.

The open fora consists of a series of 1-hour panels with guest speakers, government representatives and local and leading industry thinkers, seen as real opportunities for practical discussions of concrete problems that the ICT business/SME world now faces, for which ICT can offer solutions that are already available on the market.

KEY PROCESSES

- ✓ **Define selection procedure of ICT suppliers and SMEs**
- ✓ **Issue an expression of interest for ICT suppliers SMEs**
- ✓ **Selection of ICT suppliers and SMEs**
- ✓ **Development of pilot projects**
- ✓ **Preparation of an e-business show**
- ✓ **Preparation of open fora**
- ✓ **Implementation of the Pilot projects**
- ✓ **Running the e-business shows**
- ✓ **Launching the Open Fora**
- ✓ **Dissemination of project outcomes**
- ✓ **Awareness creation**

The proposed methodology consists of launching three (3) independent yet complementary to each other set of actions, namely the:

i) *pilot projects,*
ii) *ii) the e-business show and*
iii) *iii) the open fora,*

coupled with

iv) *project management and*
v) *dissemination activities.*

The particular methodology to be followed for each activity draws from best practices tested already in other European countries and in particular the ***"Netherlands goes Digital"*** programme (NGD) which is carried out by Syntens and the "***MerseyBroadband"*** initiative in the UK, (www.merseybroadband.com).

The ***"e-show"*** and ***"open fora"*** strand of actions match with the ***"E-rooms"*** and "***Digicircles***" axes of intervention of the NGD Programe, (www.digikring.nl).

POLICY AND STRATEGY

- **Enhance the cooperation between ICT suppliers and SMEs at regional, local or sectoral level;**

Through the "e-business show" and the "open fora" type of activities

- **Increase the availability of SME-friendly e-business solutions (hardware, software and/or services);**

Through the "e-business show" and "pilot projects" type of activities

- **Reinforce cross-border networking**

Through the organization of a dissemination workshop in Cyprus

The introduction of e-business can act as a catalyst for further development within the selected SME group, as it will eventually develop their potential to innovate and be more proactive to their environment of competition. The overall effect to them will also be to expand to other areas notably when the enterprise managers realise the benefits and potentials that can be accessed through new technology and novel entrepreneurial practices.

As far as the ICT suppliers is concerned, the information to be gathered in the course of the project through the interactions with SMEs management, franchise owners in the case of ICT equipment suppliers, and with other key persons of the local community of ICT suppliers, will enable better understanding of the competition among suppliers themselves and understanding of their SME customers. This indeed will turn out to be very relevant to the steady quest of ICT suppliers to identify and meet their customers' needs and consequently develop competitive models for delivering their e-business solutions and services.

Background on the selection of the target groups and activities

- The SMEs to participate in the project are based in Crete and will be drawn from the ranks of those that have been participated already in the Goonline Programme (more than 22.000). These SMEs will be covering the manufacturing (15,49%), construction (5,61%), trade &commerce (51,50%) as well service industries (27,41%), in order to better demonstrate the availability and usability of technologies/services in a broad range of operational applications.

- The “Goonline” SMEs target group is suitable for this project, as it eventually represents most of the enterprise population of the country: SMEs which employ less than 10 employees. Besides this target group has already acquired a level of ICT understanding as a result of the “Goonline” and its “Training Support” which both Programmes turned out to be very popular in Crete compared to other regions of Greece.

- *The selection of the region of Crete has been decided upon the factors of Physical, Social and Human Capital, explained in detail in section I Sustainability and in particular Institutional Sustainability.*

The selection of the SMEs will be based on the enterprises’ willingness to apply new, innovative operational practices. The aim is to select enterprises that can act as role models and can provide the necessary influence in the industry or sector, in which they operate, to create a ripple effect and increase the overall outreach of the project.

On the other hand an adequate number of ISP providers and hw & sw suppliers are based in Crete as its dynamic economy and vibrant universities and research centres have enabled the growth of new economy sectors with the most prominent being this of ICT, i.e. Forthnet, one of the major ISPs in Greece initially started as spin-off in Crete.

Both SMEs and ICT suppliers will be selected through an open public “call for an expression of interest” in order for them to participate in the activities described in this proposal and in line with the objectives of the call: *Enhancing the cooperation between ICT suppliers and SMEs at regional level.*

PROGRAMME SUSTAINABILITY

- The project will introduce the cluster concept from the ICT suppliers wide perspective, engaging not only vendors but key user groups or customers as well. Clusters that incorporate these wider membership features are more likely to be self sustaining and have better growth prospects.

- In order for the services described in this programme to be readily available and appealing to the ICT Suppliers and SMEs, there is a strong demand for public investment. Given that the degree of publicly offered e-services in Greece continue to be rather low, it is becoming obvious that the role of the state in introducing the e-economy to the society is decisive.

Sustainability is achieved when prevailing structures and processes have the capacity to continue to perform their functions over the long term. For institutional sustainability to be achieved it is important to have in place:

1. *participatory policy-making processes*
2. *effective public and private sector organisations that create a framework within which the livelihoods of the poor can be continuously improved.*

E-business activities cannot be in isolation from the policy environment. ICT policies may restrict the e-business activity. Other policies may encourage or discourage the application of ICTs. If e-business are to be part of a sustainable activity there will need to be a suitable policy environment. In fact regarding point 1 above, it is firmly believed that the new CSF Programme will lay the ground for new ICT and e-business policies to be put in place in the near future. CSFP regulations that govern its design and implementation encourage and oftentimes demand for participatory processes. Besides the Greek Government announced recently a series of “e-government” projects to launch soon, i.e tax declaration, e-certifications, e-invoice, etc., that it is believed will play a vital role for e-business uptake in Greece

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Planned involvement of ICT suppliers/SMEs: *the 10 SMEs and 50 I CT suppliers that consist the target groups* for the 10 pilot projects and the e-show
- *Planned participation: more than 200 SMEs and ICT suppliers will participate at the two info-days planned, more than 500 SMEs will participate at the 3-days events of the "e-show" and 'open fora".*
- Planned promotion of the action: *more than 8.000 SMES and ICT suppliers will hear about the activities of the project.*
- Planned dissemination of the results and the expected impact of the action:
- *The dissemination activities will raise awareness among SMEs to an extent so that in the total population of the Crete SMEs at least 10% will know about the project.*
- *A certain number of participating SMEs, will increase, their e-business annual spending the year after the completion of the project*
- *A certain number of participating ICT suppliers, will increase, their e-business annual turnover the year after the completion of the project*

Both groups SMEs and ICT suppliers respectively considered the exercise a useful one since it really ended up in stimulating structural links between them.

The ICT group in addition supported the idea of an exercise where standard, off-the shelf products are to be used instead of developing specific solutions for the SMEs involved.

All ICT suppliers expressed their satisfaction for having participated in the e-business show. It was in fact a useful experience getting together with their competitors and with Research and Academia representatives, talking to each other and exchanging ideas

The absence on the other hand of a major ICT Suppliers Association to have this project running under its auspices turned also to be a critical factor to ensure commitment from the participating companies.

Quite a few SMEs on their part expressed their will to continue and purchase the full solution by their ICT Supplier partner.

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

PROJECT ACRONYM: NET-SHARE

PROJECT FULL TITLE: NETWORK OF ICT EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS, SHARING EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTING SME'S.

INSTRUMENT: ICT PSP

DURATION: 36 MONTHS

DISSEMINATION LEVEL: PUBLIC

PROJECT COORDINATOR ORGANISATION NAME: Inovamais, S.A.; www.inovamais.pt

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PARTNER NAME: INMARK

CONTACT PERSON: YOLANDA URSA

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: Facilitating R&D projects in the field of eContent & eBusiness Technologies.

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: ECONTEC-EUREKA PROJECT

TARGET GROUP: INNOVATIVE SMES

DATE: 7 NOVEMBER 2008

What is eConTec? www.econtec.org

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN eCONTENT & eBUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES

eConTec (E! 3584) is a thematic network within the EUREKA framework. It focuses on facilitating R&D projects in the field of eContent & eBusiness Technologies.

eConTec (2005-2009) is operating in Belgium (Coordinator), Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, France, Norway, Hungary and Spain.

eConTec is very active in Spain www.econtec.info with three partners involved**:**

- INMARK
- AETIC – Spanish Electronics, IT and Telecommunications Industries Association
- eNEM - Spanish Technology Platform for Networked Audiovisual Technologies

Objectives:

1. To facilitate the participation of European companies, specially SMEs in EUREKA eConTec umbrella
2. To help SMEs to generate innovative and market oriented R&D projects within EUREKA
3. To provide access to eConTec services and on-line tools available at www.eConTec.org, such as eAccelerator, European Showcase and Seal of Excellence in Multimedia y Check-out-Europe.com.

[e]ConTec

Priority Areas

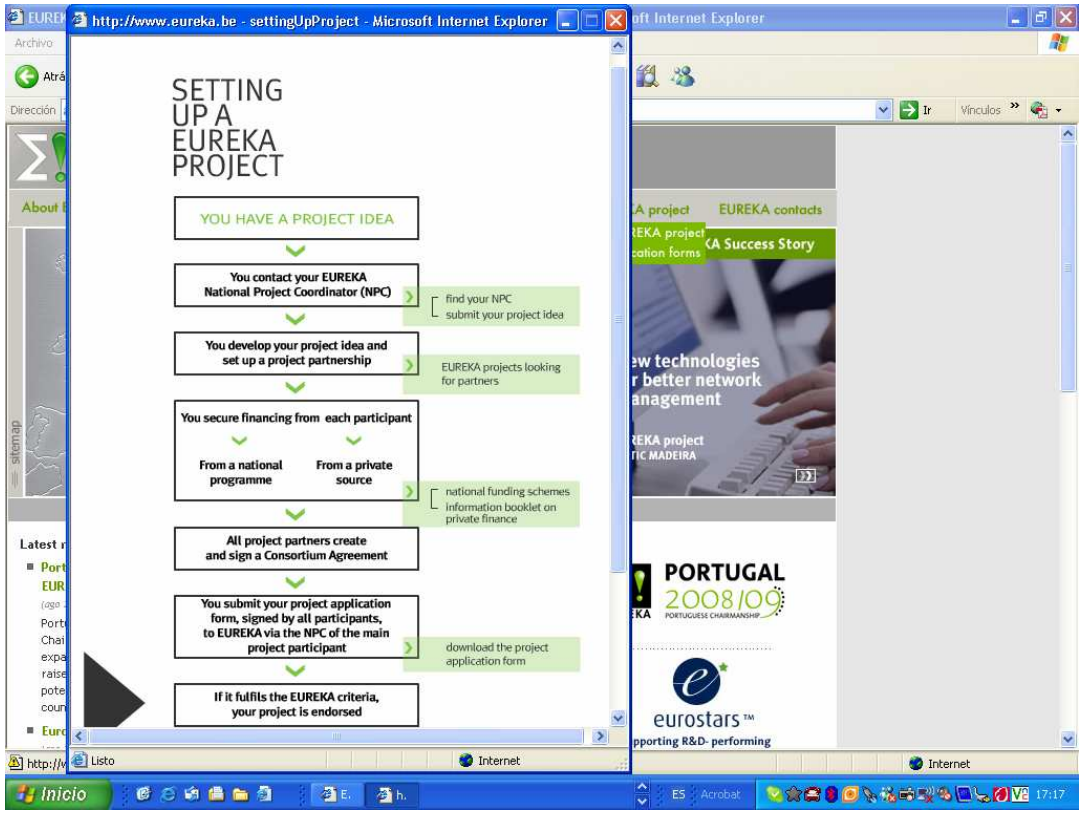
- Technologies providing access to digitized content through broadband networks and wireless & mobile devices
- Generic tools for multi-channel content creation, digitization, production, publishing, delivery, distribution, integration and management
- Visualisation technologies (including 3D and virtual reality)
- eBusiness, eCommerce, eBanking, eMarketing, eProcurement solutions
- eLearning, eEntertainment, eGaming, Virtual Reality applications
- eGovernment, eAdministration, eHealth services

The advent of the digital economy implies a smooth interaction and active collaboration between the two main components of the digital media value chain: the digital content industries (content owners, aggregators, distributors) and the infrastructure suppliers (devices, systems, networks).

The ECONTEC Umbrella focuses on technologies that help developing, packaging, managing, marketing and distributing econtent products and services.

If you are active in these areas, eConTec may **help you acquire public funding for your market-orientated R&D projects**.

Why would you submit a EUREKA project?



Because EUREKA provides bottom-up, user-friendly financial support for your market-near R&D!

How can You get going?

Dedicated experts in the field of public funding programmes will support you in:

- drafting a EUREKA funding application
- finding partners (innovative SMEs, large companies, research institutions, etc.)
- and in finding your way through the maze of the various funding programmes from which you may benefit.

  To start with, you can **register on-line at** www.econtec.org . That implies that you will receive the eConTec Newsletter and that you are generally interested to be included in the eConTec community.

If you have already a project idea, you can fill in our **Project Proposal Questionnaire**. The assessment of your proposal idea is one of our services, and it is free of charge!

eConTec

MAIN ACTIVITIES IN SPAIN, 2007-2008

- **Promotion of eConTec to companies in the industry of digital contents** through workshops, conferences and other events
- **Coaching sessions to candidates to submit EUREKA-eConTec proposals:**
  - Procedures for getting the EUREKA label
  - Personal support in the initial phases of setting up a EUREKA Project
  - Submission of project idea to EUREKA National Project Coordinator
  - Partners search
- **Collaboration with NPC:** facilitate contact between companies applying to EUREKA and the NPC, dissemination of EUREKA news and information
- **Research on a Roadmap about exploitation of R&D results:** new business models of the e-content industry, success factors, drivers and barriers for the exploitation of R&D results, etc.
- **Promotion of eConTec services: www.econtec.org www.econtec.info ,** mailing, Newsletters, brochures, folders, announcement of the European Seal of E-excellence, etc.

Example of Good Practices in Spain

- + 1.000 companies from the e-content industry have been targeted in promotion activities about the opportunities offered by eConTec-EUREKA
- +150 companies performing R&D activities have received personal advice to generate and set up a EUREKA projects
- 25 SMEs have participated in Coaching sessions and mobilisation to action: definition of project idea, procedures and requirements of EUREKA label, preliminary and final application forms, contact NPC
- 12 technology Spanish companies submitted the preliminary application form to the NPC and provide financial and legal information to the NPC through a web application for project on-line management (www.cdti.es), which is a requirement of the Spanish NPC to start a EUREKA project. In addition these companies had one or more meetings with the NPC to continue with the process of proposal submission.
- 8 companies are in the phase of defining their Project idea and have the intention to submit the proposal to EUREKA by the end of the year.
- Project Technology profile:
  - Business models for digital contents
  - Intelligent content tools for virtual museums
  - Distribution of audiovisual contents
  - Security systems bases on mobile technology
  - RFID for cold chain traceability
  - Efficient driving
  - Sheet metal production

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

PROJECT ACRONYM: NET-SHARE

PROJECT FULL TITLE: NETWORK OF ICT EXPERIENCED ORGANIZATIONS, SHARING EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTING SME'S.

INSTRUMENT: ICT PSP

DURATION: 36 MONTHS

DISSEMINATION LEVEL: PUBLIC

PROJECT COORDINATOR ORGANISATION NAME: Inovamais, S.A.; www.inovamais.pt

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PARTNER NAME: WIT

CONTACT PERSON: SINEAD QUEALY

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: Network-centric Middleware for group communications and resource sharing across heterogeneous embedded systems

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: MORE

TARGET GROUP: Embedded-electronics

DATE: 04/06/09

Grant Agreement: 225004

NET-SHARE

MORE

Network-centric Middleware for group communications and resource sharing across heterogeneous embedded systems

- IST funded
- Start Date: June 1st 2006 - 36 months duration
- Under Directorate G Unit G3 – Embedded Systems
- Total Funds €2.7m
- 7 Partners

End User scenarios

1. Remote health monitoring, specifically for diabetics
2. Mitigation management of environmental damage in the forestry domain

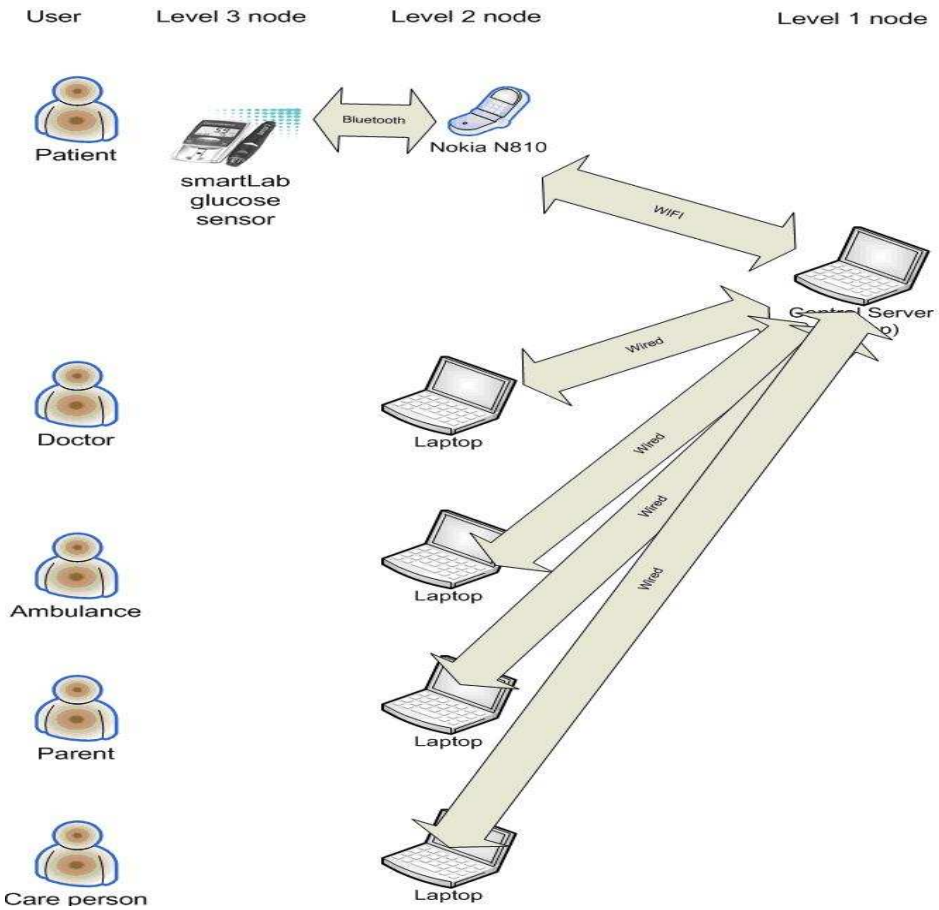
MORE

Network-centric Middleware for group communications and resource sharing across heterogeneous embedded systems

MORE is a research project currently being undertaken by the Telecommunications Software and Systems Group (part of the Waterford Institute of Technology) along with seven other European partners from France, Spain, Germany and Hungary. These partners are from both academic and industrial establishments.

The main goal of MORE is to provide an efficient disease management service for patients with chronic diseases like diabetes, by employing technology to enhance their care through the provision of remote monitoring.

MORE has published an extract and article detailing its work in the Irish Medical Times journal, June 2008

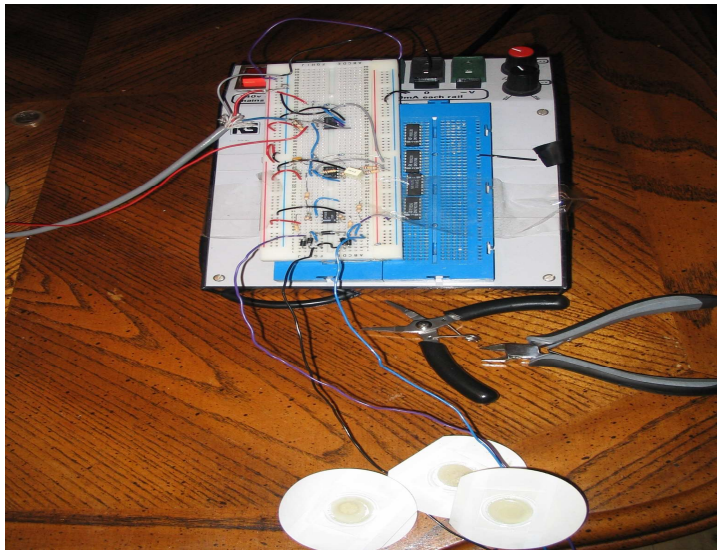


End user scenario 1:

MORE is a middleware platform. It is a piece of software that connects two more software applications so that they can communicate effectively.
It will facilitate communication across a group of users as per the diagram.

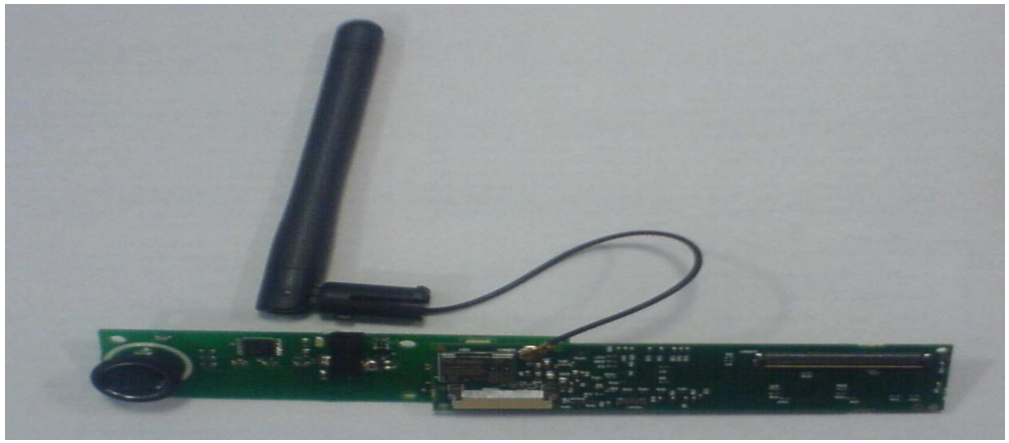
This diagram shows the demonstration setup for the Health Care scenario. The Patient's blood sugar level is being monitored; all the other actors shown on the left are potential members of this patient's care group depending on the readings.

The patient's blood sugar readings are transferred wirelessly from their generic blood sugar monitors to medical personnel via the patient's mobile phone or PDA.



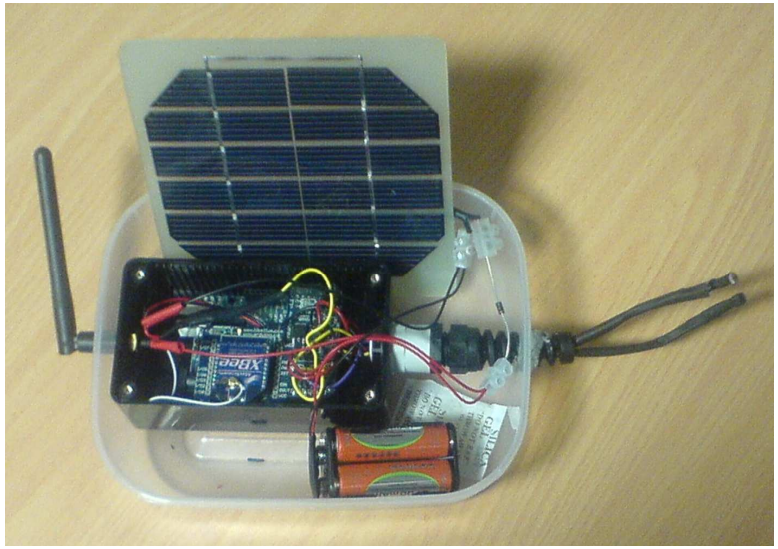
MORE used the Squidbee unit to monitor a person's heart rate by attaching circuitry to it (an ECG). This was achieved by assembling a circuit found on the internet which contained a number of Operational Amplifiers to take in the signals from the electrodes and provide an output for analogue to digital conversion. The circuit also contained several low power resistors, capacitors and diodes for safety.

This is the Blood sugar monitor used in the Health care scenario.



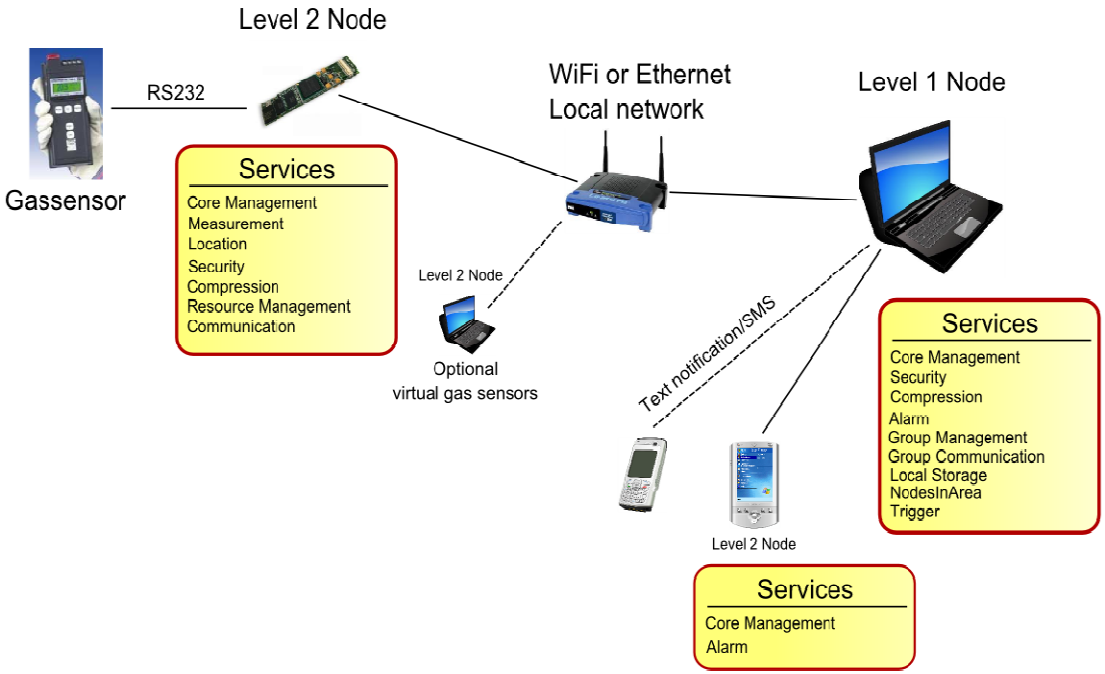
The Gumstix is a fully functional open source computer. It can be individually extended through expansion boards. The MORE prototype platform is based on an XScale PXA270 CPU (ARM 5) with 128MB RAM and 32MB ROM. The Gumstix will serve as a gateway between connected sensors and Web Services. Ethernet or WiFi.

Service developed which extracts sensor data from Squidbee devices (Zigbee enabled)



Squidbee is an Open Hardware and Source wireless sensor device. Twelve digital I/O and six analog I/O allow for the connection of up to 18 sensors. Data collected from these sensors can be securely (the Zigbee module lets you use the AES-128 bit cipher algorithm), wirelessly transmitted using the Zigbee protocol, to a “gateway” which is connected directly to a USB or serial port.

The MORE service developed to interact with the Squidbee unit reads temperature, humidity and, light values from the sensor. For the Squidbee service the MORE group attached circuitry to one of the Squidbee’s six analogue inputs to measure the power level of the attached battery. This reading was then transmitted and corresponding code alerted the user as to when the battery was failing.



End user scenario 2:

In order to mitigate and manage environmental damage (e.g. water quality (see EU Water Framework Directive), soil functionality (see EU Soil Protection Policy)) information must be transferred from automatic monitoring facilities (e.g. EU Level-I/II plots) to a heterogeneous group of (a) affected land owners and (b) persons in charge at different administration, research, and management organisations.

The MORE middleware will enable professional users (administrations, research stations, management organisations) to receive and work with maps, e.g. with the help of a smart phone, PDA or MDA in this scenario. Private users (land owners) can receive information in a simplified form, which can be transferred to normal telecommunication instruments (mobile phone, Fax, etc.). Thus, users on different communication levels can be informed effectively and rapidly on probable hot spots (storm damage, critical release of harmful substances into drinking water).

This slide shows the demonstration setup for the Mitigation management scenario.

Mitigation management of environmental damage in the forestry domain.

The EU Partners involved in MORE.

Project Partners

1 PRO DV, **Germany**

2 Thales Communications S.A., **France**

3 University of Dortmund, Communication Networks Institute & Embedded Systems Group, **Germany**

4 Applied Logic Laboratory, **Hungary**

5 Waterford Institute of Technology, Telecommunications Software & System Group, **Ireland**

6 Technical University of Dresden, **Germany**

7 University of Debrecen, **Hungary**

8 Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, **Spain**

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

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PARTNER NAME: INNOVA SPA

CONTACT PERSON: FRANCESCO NIGLIA

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: DOPCHEESE

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: LOMBARDIA REGION, ITALY. SUPPORT TO SMES

TARGET GROUP: AGRO-FOOD, DOP CHEESE PRODUCERS

DATE: 07/11/2008

A **technology transfer** to Agro-Food SMEs sector

We will describe in detail the process that brought an innovation to an SMEs cluster, thus to provide more tools and possibilities to improve their business and their economic sustainability

Context: who

- **Field Associations:** COLDIRETTI, COMUNITA' MONTANA
- **SMEs**: agrofood dairy sector (Alpine zone)
  - *The wide-dairy sector in that geographic cluster has 1.600 producers, 1/3 milk producers and annual turnover of € 102.000.000*
- **Technologies owners**: Research Centres, Industries

The analysed SMEs cluster belongs to the agro-food field, dairy sector (around 1.600 subjects), located in the north of Italy (Alps).

The process has been also supported by field producers (Coldiretti) and local associations (Comunità Montana).

It's worth to mentioning the presence of at least an R&D partner, mandatory to have an effective production innovation.

Context: the objectives

- **Support** of SMEs competitive growth through the adoption of innovation plans and the development of models to be applied at local level (*traceability, production safety, quality,* consumers' health, local promotion)
- **Promote** the safeguard and valorisation of local brands and products
- **Promote** technology innovation in agro-food field companies, with focus on dairy sector; thus to be ready for the new market requirements.
- **Gather** and **freeze** information about the whole milk-transformation process and cheese production

Just to fix the context and the meanings of this activity.

The mean target is to provide a medium-long term sustainability strategy to the business of this SMEs cluster; sub-targets have been:

- To valorise the local brands and product
- To improve / increase the product quality
- To answer to a market request

Context: beneficiaries SMEs

- **SMEs target group:**
  - **sector:** agro-food dairy
  - **geographical area:** districts of Bergamo, Brescia, Sondrio. North Italy
  - **cluster**: cheese producers "*Produttori Formai de Mut dell'Alta Val Brembana*"
- **Typical profile:**
  - up to **15** associates, around **100** head of cattle, up to **10** fellow workers, turnover about **€ 500.000,00**

A description of the mean class representative of the cluster. The action has been tailored on SMEs having this profile but it's easily extendible and adoptable by other profiles.

Technology Request: analysis

- **Company / Farm** technological audits.
  - **knowledge** of actual and puntual production
  - **SWOT analysis** of companies in the traceability context
- **User needs list**, needs of all the audited companiese

How we started: survey of companies' needs through a technological audit and an explanation of the production process.

As the traceability is one of the most important surveyed issues, we also carried out a SWOT analysis of the applicability and effects of the traceability within the business of each SME.

A database of all the SMEs needs have been developed

Technology Request: selection

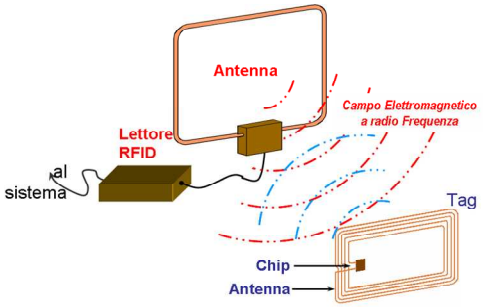
- **Selection** of best pilots projects to be developed in the analysed context and to be applied in the surveyed cluster
- **Pilot projects**: **4** related to traceability and quality check
- **Best pilot:** "a traceability system very easy to implement and a lower economic impact and production quality impact"
  - **chosen for:** sustainability of the implementation, costs, benefits, range of interested and potentially involved companies / farms

The whole support action has been focused on 4 "best pilots", all developed and supported; one of these has been retained as "best" for a list of criteria that highlight the potentialities to transfer this experience on other clusters and, very important, the one with lowest economic impact.

Technology Transfer: technology 1/2

RFID: Radio Frequency Identification relatively new fronter for information management (134,2 kHz)

This technology allows the use of radio-waves for authomatic systems and traceability in zoo-technology field.



The technology chosen for the traceability. The RFiD

Technology Transfer: technology 2/2

A collar is the bridge between the animals and the production process: the identification during the milking allows the storage of information like: milk quantity, kind and quantity of fooding,

The collar permits an unique identification of the animal since it includes a passive transponder like picture (not scaled)

How to apply the technology to the agro-farm sector, the less invasive solution was the one represented.

Technology Transfer: scientific basis

- **Tech-Sci co-operation** aimed at ad-hoc solution finding (technology not still marketed)
- **Basis studies** (Universities) focused on the bio-compatibility of non-organic material with cheeses
- **Initial experimentation** of a microchip inserted in the mature cheese rind thanks to the adoption of a material film bio-compatible based on K-Caseina

The “scientific” side of the action was related to the adoption of innovative bio-material to the product itself.

This is the “bridge” from the technology and the innovation, because it provides all the gathered information to the final user.

Moreover, without this support, it would have been inefficient the use of RFiD

Technology Transfer: final idea

- **Obtain** a weaving factory traceability system very easy to implement, economic and product low-impact starting from the installation of a microchip in the cheese pieces.
- **Apply** this RFiD technology on each cheese piece both with mature and quite-cottage cheeses.

Description of the final idea: gather and provide all the most important information to the user and to the producer. The former improves the clients' perception of the product and their confidence on the producers.

From the "producer" side, this system gives a very-high added value on the whole production control.

Technology Transfer: the benefits

- **Possibility to know** all the information about the animal life and cheese production
- **Possibility to create** an ad-hoc tag for final consumer thanks to RFid readers that all the dealers have at disposal
- **Management** of un-compliances on all the production weaving factory
- **Complete electronic** management of information
- **High level trasparency** towards the final users (clients)
- **Technological Innovation path** (best-practice)

The list of perceived benefits by the two main actors: producers and clients.

Producers have a more harmonised view of the production parameters and users have more insurances about the products origin and the whole value chain.

Technology Transfer: the business

- **basis to ask for D.O.P**. (Protected Origin products)
- **creation** of heterogeneous clusters of producers (whole production chain)
- **direct** connection with users
- **freeze** costs and **fix** prices to users
- **fix sustainable** yearly production volumes
- **improve quality and final users' perception**

From the merely business aspects, we have two main aspects:

- producer can join together into consortia that ensure the continuity of the product quality standards with sustainable growth plan;
- clients can purchase a potentially D.O.P. product that is a kind of insurance about the quality.

Technology Transfer: support to TT

- National and Local (Regional) fundings
- Scientific agreements for development among TT actors and other private Beings
- Check / Analysis of request for patent

These are examples of how we supported the best practices, not only the one listed here, but in a more global view of the request of innovation by SMEs. In fact, we can choose different funding instruments (private, public) with different timings (months, year) and different means (research, development, industrialisation, etc..)

PROPOSAL/CONTRACT N.: 225004

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PROJECT COORDINATOR ORGANISATION NAME: Inovamais, S.A.; www.inovamais.pt

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PARTNER NAME: INOVA+

CONTACT PERSON: MIGUEL SOUSA

GOOD PRACTICE NAME: IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ONLINE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TOOL IN A HIGHLY INNOVATIVE COMPANY

SOURCE OF THE GOOD PRACTICE: SMALL INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION COMPANY

TARGET GROUP: SMES < 50 EMPLOYEES

DATE: 10 FEBRUARY 2009

Implementation of a Knowledge Management Tool in a highly innovative company

Cybion

Italy

This Good Practice relates to the i**mplementation of a web-based knowledge base (KB) in a small company**. The projects foresaw some specific challenges and arose from the strong commitment of the entrepreneur.

Index

The document outlines the relevant information that makes the project an example of best practice.

- The company
- Company needs
- Main challenges
- Developed tool
- Success factors
- Main critical aspects

The company

- **Location**: northern Italy in a highly competitive and innovative area + other commercial sites in Europe
- **Core-Business**: Mechatronics (Industrial automation sector)
- **Organization type**: pyramidal
- **Size**: small (<60 employees)
- **Assets**: personalized machines/use of technological innovation/entrepreneur's extreme problem solving skill/ relevant acquired know-how
- **Criticalities**: one-man centric; dispersion of information

The company is based in Northern Italy which is a highly competitive innovative area. It acts in the field of **the industrial automation** studying, **designing and building machines and modules for the automation of assembly processes**. The industries served are various and numerous. Among the most relevant: **electromechanical sector, (micro components, electronics and mechatronics) automotive industry, furniture industry, pharmaceutical.**

The organization is **centered on the entrepreneur/founder figure** which is, in terms of know-how and problem solving, the richness of the company. At the same time this determine an **entrepreneur-dependent sales and production process**: the company **know-how being dispersed in different places** and formats (personal computer, paper archives, each single employee experience, sales man agenda), the entire commercial and production process is based on the entrepreneur's availability.

The company needs

- Speed-up the sales and production process
- Re-use the relevant company know-how from everywhere in a simple and immediate way
- Having a cost-effective solution valid today and for the future

Following to a preliminary audit, the company needs mainly:

- to **speed up the sales and production process**,
- to shorten time to go on the market
- to pass **from a passive to a proactive commercial approach**.

This is possible by making all the key figures able to **access the relevant know-how that the company has acquired along the years** in a **simple, immediate and effective way**. The know-how relates to **Competitors, Technologies and Clients** and can be exploited for commercial, marketing and technological development purposes.

The challenges

- Making the web-based KB the main access point to the company know-how
- Starting a massive and effective re-use of the acquired know-how
- Supporting the company in its transition process from a passive to a proactive commercial approach

The project is challenging mainly with respect of the following aspects:

- Making the web-based KB the main access point to the company know-how: employees and management should trust the tool and use it frequently
- Starting a massive and effective re-use of the acquired know-how: the company should query the KB to find information useful to speed up the realization of an offer, to find out the most appropriate target to invite to new machines presentation day for example.
- Supporting the company in its transition process from a passive to a proactive commercial approach

The developed tool (1/2)

- Web-based Knowledge Base (KB) for the storage and the consultation of the company know-how
- Information: competitors, clients, technologies
- Type of content: anagraphical, commercial and financial data
- Format: descriptive fiche, graphics, numeric data and rate
- Information classification: according to the shared internal terminology adapted to the KB information architecture

The solution to the outlined challenges and needs consisted in a **web-based Knowledge Base designed for the easy storage and effective consultation of the relevant know-how**:

- The KB stores all the relevant information about competitors, clients (prospects and portfolio) developed technologies.
- The KB can be:
  - **accessed from everywhere** if provided with an Internet connection
  - on the basis of **4 different profiles**. Each profile being provided with a personalized interface in terms of functionalities and fields for query.

The developed tool (2/2)

Key definitions for the tool:

- Easy to use and manage
- Dynamic (continuous feeding regulated by established procedures)
- Customized (profiles and information classification)

Key functionalities:

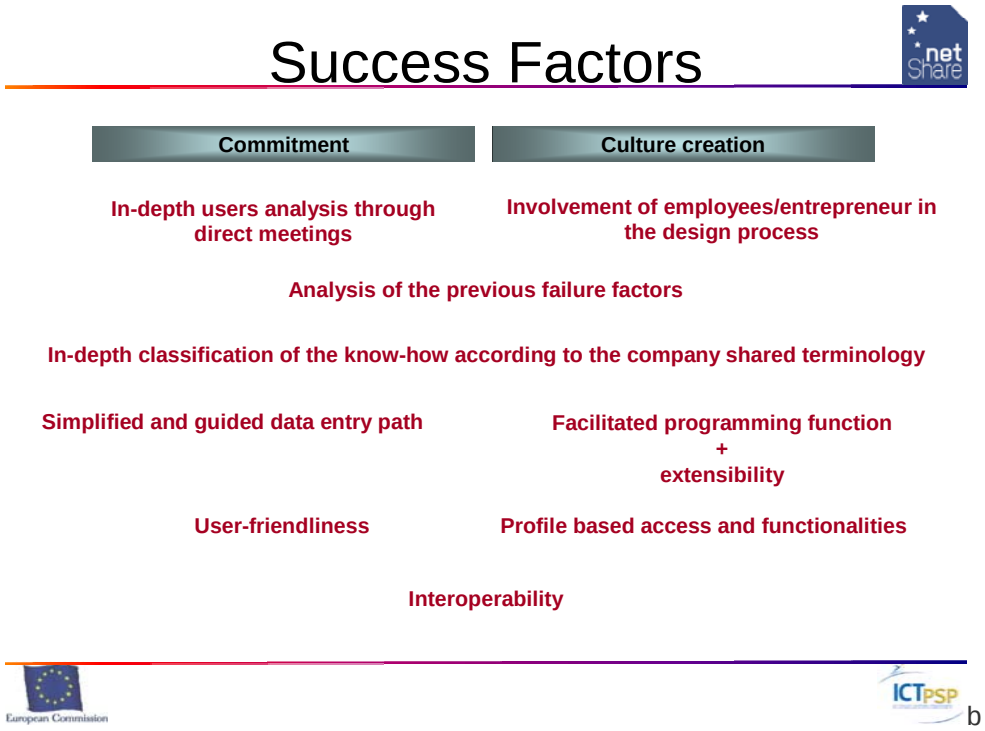
- Query (cross-query)
- Insert
- Manage and modify data
- Alert and tracking system
- Facilitated programming function

The developed tool is very easy to be used and required **no specific skills to be managed.** The data insertion is simple, guided through specific procedures such as predetermined fields (options) and compulsory fields. The access is profile-based which provides the user with customized information thus reducing time for finding useful consistent information. The query can be simple or complex (multi-field). It can be keyword based or based on predetermined field to be chosen from an option menu. The data entry is also simplified and boosted by predetermined path, guided data entry, option menu and compulsory fields thus reducing the margin for errors and the incomplete information. For this purpose a tracking system was implemented which provides the KB manager with information on performed activities and alerts on the state of the KB in terms of incomplete information. The KB was also geared with a facilitated programming function which provides some users (administrator profile) with the possibility to modify some specific parameters relating to the information classification. The fore mentioned parameters were identified with the company as those parameters that are more willing to be modified during the years.

Critical aspects

- Identification and harmonization of users needs and expectations (entrepreneur/employees/management)
- Previous failed initiatives
- Other DBs with incomplete information
- Combine maintenance cost reduction with needs for frequent updates
- Different usage needs

The project faced some major critical aspects such as the management's mistrust due to previous similar initiatives and the presence of different needs and expectations



The main success factors arises from the main critical aspects and are those aspects featuring the good practice.

The strong commitment of the entrepreneur and the creation of a culture in the company was a quite long but fundamental process. The needs analysis and the creation of a culture were fundamental **to boost the project among the management and to overcome their mistrust** derived mainly from the failure of previous similar initiatives. To this purpose, **the analysis and the re-use (if possible) of the existing material and acquired experience** was a key success factor. For example, the KB is totally build on an in-depth classification of the know-how according to the company shared terminology which fasten the adoption of the KB inside the company and improve the user-friendliness degree of both the data entry and consultation process .

Successful outcomes

- The KB is frequently updated and used
  - 154 competitors
  - 702 clients (portfolio and prospects)
  - 137 technology mapped and analysed
- Benefits for the promotional activity (proactive)
- Shorter time from client's offer request to proposal dispatch
- Optimisation of resources: more time to be dedicated to problem-solving

The sales and marketing frequently update the KB and use it during the commercial activities. 6 months from the KB release, the following results were achieved:

- 154 is the number of the competitors mapped and rated
- 702 are the clients (portfolio and prospects) completed with information on the technology offered or provided
- 137 are the technology mapped and analysed

The proactive promotional activity was eased: the sales manager queried the KB to identify the appropriate target to contact for presenting a new machines by matching the stored clients features and the developed technology main characteristics. The company offer is highly personalised. Nevertheless in the design process parts of previous experience could be used thus dedicating more time to the personalisation and problem-solving activity. This process has been boosted by the use of the KB which is frequently queried each time the company receives a new request to search for previous realised studies and machines. The tangible outcomes have been:

- Shorter time from client's offer request to proposal dispatch
- Optimisation of resources