



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Half-time whistle blown for RFID-ROI-SME project

Project to measure return on investment in RFID has reached half-time; first results promising, but full implementation still ahead

Brussels, 10 March 2011 – RFID-ROI-SME, the European project coordinated by UEAPME with the goal of understanding and fully leveraging the benefits of RFID technology, has now reached half-time. The first twelve months of the two-year contract saw the inception, preparation and testing of eight pilot projects across six European nations. RFID technology, which allows real time data collection without physical or line of sight contact, has grown strongly in the last year among Europe's larger companies. However, SMEs have yet to fully leverage the technology. RFID-ROI-SME shows practical examples of the tangible benefits RFID can deliver across many sectors. These are being disseminated to wider SME communities using leaflets, best practices, and blueprints.

"The preparation phase has now been completed and the project moves ahead on schedule", said Mr **Sebastiano Toffaletti**, coordinator of the project. *"All companies involved have been now planning for a long time and are eager to fully implement their brainchildren. It has been a fruitful cooperation thus far: partners helped each other with their respective doubts and questions. We trust that this spirit has further improved the pilots",* he continued.

To ensure European SMEs' competitiveness in a knowledge-based globalised economy, the project funded by the European Commissions' Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme has singled out eight companies in six different countries to run pilots on the introduction of RFID at SMEs. UEAPME, as coordinator, manages the consortium to ensure the quality and standardisation of the reporting on the pilots work. With such diverse sectors as construction, logistics, packaging, plastics, archiving, apparel, security and e-ticketing involved, the project takes a horizontal approach. Every sector will learn whether an investment in RFID is profitable and what technological architecture is best suited for them. A website, www.rfid-roi-sme.eu, will inform about the project and post monthly updates on each pilot's progress.

The first results have been positive and the companies look optimistically onto the next year and beyond. *"Three partners had already worked together in a similar project. There, the getting to know each other was not needed but where companies did not have prior contact collaboration ran smoothly",* explained Mr Toffaletti. *"Some already think about teaming up beyond the scope of the project: in England, for example, a new firm will provide RFID-supported security and surveillance services. The entity will be a joint venture between the end-user and the solution provider."*

The rough economic climate, however, has not passed unnoticed. The European Commission has strict financial rules. SMEs, generally more financially feeble, often had to provide a bank guarantee in order to receive any pre-financing. The cost of the bank guarantee though, is financed only, as everything else in the project, up to 50%. Many companies have chosen to wait until after the first yearly review, which is to take place in the beginning of May, to receive any funding. *"This in turn shows how much partners believe in the viability of the project",* noted Mr Toffaletti.

The first results are being presented at various events throughout the year, the next of which will be the "RACE European Network RFID"'s annual conference in Prague, on the 29 and 30 March. More information on events and the project in general is available on the project's website (www.rfid-roi-sme.eu) and on its the Twitter page (twitter.com/rfid_roi_sme)

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 84 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information: <http://www.ueapme.com/>

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