

EMBRACE II PARTNERS



EMBRACE II PROJECT MEETINGS

5TH PROJECT MEETING

10 & 11 DECEMBER 2007

PREFECTURAL AUTHORITY OF THESSALONIKI
GREECE



The **Fifth Project meeting** took place in Thessaloniki, the second largest city of Greece, organised by the **Prefectural Authority of Thessaloniki (PP2)**.

The two-day session was partially dedicated to the analysis of the so far remaining activities of the work packages and the financial issues in order to better organize the last project month's action plan. Core topic however was the presentation of the **"Pilot Observatory for SMEs"**.

During the second day the administrators received all the technical and practical information about the structure and the function of the Pilot SMEs Observatory. Both the users and administrators' interfaces were thoroughly presented at the meeting.

Moreover, partners had the opportunity to discuss and make suggestions to the technical team on the content and the structure of the Pilot SMEs Observatory in order for the Lead Partner to be able to finalise this innovating tool.

At the end of the meeting, partners agreed on the dates of the Final Conference foreseen in Athens mid of January.

Partners were requested by the LP to feel free to invite representatives from SMEs and regional/ local/ national stakeholders interested in the achieved activities and results of the EMBRACE II project.

During the weeks followed, the Thessaloniki meeting partners went on with the collection of data and its consequent upload on the portal.

6TH PROJECT MEETING
18TH JANUARY 2008
TREK CONSULTING
GREECE



The **Sixth and last Project meeting** took place in Athens on 18th January 2008, the day after the Final Conference.

The short meeting aimed at: defining issues on the remaining project actions before the official project's finalization and analysing the project's and each partner's absorption rate.

The LP enhanced project partners to finalize all of pending actions according to the set time-plan and do their best for receiving their certifications in mid of March- if possible- for the on time preparation and submission of the Payment Claim.

At the end of the meeting, during a discussion, final remarks and suggestions came from some partners, who stressed the significance of a future collaboration under the framework of the new Programming Period 2007-2013.

Before the final lunch of the consortium, it was time for a nice project picture.



FINAL CONFERENCE
17TH JANUARY 2008
TITANIA HOTEL- ATHENS
GREECE

The project final conference took place in Athens on 17th January 2008 at the TITANIA Hotel in Panepistimiou str in the city centre.

About 60 persons attended the conference while press releases were sent to national media and websites.

After the welcome message by Mr. D. Papapolyzos, TREK Consulting SA, Mrs Melina Lazaropoulou presented the overview of the project, the partnership, and project's main aims and results.

The main results/deliverables of the project were: the **enhanced EMBRACE portal** (www.e-embrace.net) offering services to SMEs and the **Pilot SMEs Observatory** providing useful statistical data and information on the SMEs' development in the participating countries. It is available on: www.embrace-observatory.net.



Mrs Mina Torou presented the collected feedback regarding the evaluation of the Portal's and Pilot SMEs Observatory's operation. The feedback was gathered by users and stakeholders of all project partners' areas.

According to the Users' statements, EMBRACE Portal including its new service (SMEs Case Studies) was friendly to the user and it was evaluated as an interesting innovative tool.

Policy makers characterised the Observatory as a useful tool to public administrative Authorities and an interesting means for raising awareness of policy makers on ICT impacts on local/regional socioeconomic development.

"Continuous Offering of High Quality Services" was the motto of the presentation for the evaluation of the Portal and the Observatory.

In the second part of the Closing Conference representatives of the project partners presented their regional strategy concerning **"Regional Competitiveness, Information Society and Entrepreneurship in the new programming period 2007-2013"**.

Prof. Giancarlo Raffaldi, Consultant of CECTEC, IT; Mr. Alberto Mazin, Vice-Mayor of the Municipality of Piran, Slovenia; Mr. Gejza Legen, Vice Director of the RDA Kosice, Slovakia; Mr. Aleksandar Tonkov, Executive Director of RDA Plovdiv, Bulgaria; Mr. Bashkim Sykja, Director in the Directorate of Business Promotion, Ministry of Economy, Trade & Energy, Albania; Mr. Zoran Vuckevij, Director of SMEDA, Montenegro; and Ms. Marija Nikolic, Manager of Centre for Women Entrepreneurship, Republic of Serbia; gave an overview of the present situation and future plan of their regions on the issue of entrepreneurship for 2007-2013.



Presentations are available on the project's website!

NEWS FROM THE NEW NODES

The **new nodes** continued in the dissemination activities of the EMBRACE II services and organised local conferences

addressed to their regional stakeholders and target groups.



MILAN - ITALY

The **CESTEC, Lombard Centre for the Technological and Productive Development of Crafts and Small Businesses** organised a local conference in Milan at CESTEC premises on 14th December 2007.

Participants were members of SMEs associations and local stakeholders.

CESTEC expert in ICT working on the project was also present and available to answer to the questions and suggestions of the audience.

The Portal and the Observatory were presented to the participants along with the offered services.

Promotional material was distributed and feedbacks are expected once the Observatory will be finalized.

PLOVDIV-BULGARIA

Regional Development Agency with Bsc for SMEs



VALORIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF EMBRACE II PROJECT RESULTS

Plovdiv Regional Development Agency with Business Support Centre for SMEs has started a new project **"Virtual Incubator for Unemployed People and New Entrepreneurs from Municipalities of Saedinenie and Kaloyanovo"** from

Plovdiv district under the Programme "Active Conditions on the Labour Market" of the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with the financial support of the World Bank.

The main objective of the project is training, consulting and coaching of more than 30 people to start up their own businesses and to support new entrepreneurs and SMEs to enlarge their activities by training and consultancy, using of ICT and access to financial support, from the two rural municipalities.

The main activities are:

- Training seminars
- Consultancy services – individual and group consultations
- Provision of expert services and technical assistance
- Intermediate services
- Administrative-secretarial services
- Using the information of a specialized Internet site

RDA Plovdiv will link the implementation of the new project with the Internet site of the Pilot Observatory and Embrace II Portal, as well as it will use the good practices, the training modules and other outcomes.

Through these actions, the follow-up strategy and the sustainability of the Embrace II Project and the Pilot Observatory for SMEs is being ensured.

NEWS

NEW ON THE PORTAL!

Three articles concerning the ICT support to SMEs, written by the Italian expert Mrs Francalanci, will be soon downloadable from the project portal:

❖ Industrial applications of RFID systems:

Radio frequency identification (RFID) systems are made up of readers and "smart tags", that is, tiny microchips or integrated circuits with an antenna attached and embedded into labels. The antenna enables the chip to transmit the label's identification information, the electronic product code (EPC), to a reader. When the reader is prompted, the tag broadcasts the

information onto its chip. The reader converts the radio waves reflected back from an RFID tag into digital information that can then be passed on to computers or computer mainframes. There the information is collected, sorted, and converted into relevant business data.

Radio tags can be applied on nearly any object (even inside the human body). RFID chips give every tagged object a worldwide unique identification code. RFID tags are already used to track a high volume of objects shipped around the world in planes, trucks and ships, through ports and warehouses, on to store shelves, and into homes and offices. Accurate tracking can make companies reduce significantly yearly costs by improving the efficiency of supply chains and reducing labour costs, inventory, and theft.

Radio frequency identification technology could be the main driver of the next wave of efficiencies into business and industry. Business processes can be improved through the increased and reliable visibility of product flows and smoothing of the supply chain. RFID can be used in a wide variety of applications and businesses and it can provide deep and real-time insights into customer buying patterns and habits. However, in order to reap all the benefits of RFID applications, they must be integrated with the company's business context and with the enterprise applications. A variety of solutions at different scales of complexity, spanning from basic slap & ship applications for small-scale businesses to complete platforms integrated with the company's enterprise applications. The costs vary accordingly to the size and complexity of the RFID systems and its ranges from around €20,000 for the simplest solutions to several million Euro for integrated platforms.

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