

## Companies get guidance on how to tag pallets and containers

*Two new guidelines show how to use GS1 EPCglobal standards-compliant RFID tags to tag assets in the supply chain*

**Brussels, Belgium, 13 September 2010** - Although GS1 EPCglobal's second-generation ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) RFID standards have been in place since 2006, until today it has been unclear how to tag pallets and containers.

Now, thanks to efforts by two GS1 working groups, clear guidelines exist to use RFID to identify these assets that are essential for transporting goods through the supply chain.

### Ensuring returnable transport items return to base

Under the leadership of Keith Sherry (general manager, BT Supply Chain Services) and Ju Seon Kang (Manager, Korea Container Pool), the Returnable Transport Item (RTI) Interest Group brought together major manufacturers, retailers, transport providers and solution providers to agree on how best to apply GS1 EPCglobal second-generation UHF RFID standards to returnable trade items such as pallets, roll cages, returnable plastic containers, tote boxes, and ingredients bins.

"The use of returnable transport items is an increasing phenomenon in the modern supply chain, with companies constantly seeking to reduce costs, increase handling efficiencies and improve environmental responsibility through less waste," explains Sherry. "But for that to happen, companies need standard ways of identifying these assets to be able to track and trace their flow through the supply chain."

The guideline contains detailed descriptions of multi-party business use cases to understand the need for identification and management of pallets and other RTIs, requirements that relate to what data is to be captured in user memory portion of tag, how it is to be maintained securely and advice about the placement of tags to optimise accurate data capture.



"This guideline sets a solid foundation for companies to use GS1 EPCglobal RFID standards as an integral part of their asset tracking capabilities. Ultimately, it will lead to more efficient supply chain and greater visibility of both the assets themselves and the goods they are transporting. The business case is clear, now it's up to companies to start implementing," concludes Sherry.

The full guideline can be downloaded from [http://www.epcglobalinc.org/standards/implementation\\_guidelines/](http://www.epcglobalinc.org/standards/implementation_guidelines/).

### Helping RFID tags survive the rugged supply chain

Containers used in ocean, air, road and rail transportation experience some of the most extreme conditions in the supply chain including wide variations in temperature, humidity and pressures and exposure to fluid contaminants, dust and dirt.

The Technical Implementation Guide for Conveyance Asset Tag (CAT) Environmental Testing aims to establish a baseline level of testing for passive second-generation UHF RFID tags to meet the rigours of transportation. It also provides guidelines for the placement and encoding of RFID CAT tags for the tracking of assets such as sea containers, dry vans, air freight containers, rail cars and intermodal

containers. The group that wrote the guideline involved participants from iControl, Damco, Boeing, SPAWAR Systems Center San Diego, Exel/DHL Supply Chain Americas and FedEx.

"Hardened passive RFID tags already exist. Ultimately, these tags need to function correctly under a wide variety of conditions and they need to be both usable and durable. Until this guideline was written there was no common understanding about how these tags should be adequately tested. Now both tag manufacturers and transport industry companies have a benchmark that will improve the reliability of products and solutions in the market," commented Tony Hollis, director of product development and innovation for Exel/DHL Supply Chain Americas and co-chair of GS1 EPCglobal's Transportation & Logistics Services Industry Action Group (TLS IAG).



The guidelines have built on experience of three successful transport and logistics pilots initiated by the GS1 EPCglobal's Transportation & Logistics Services Industry Action Group (TLS IAG). The most recent pilot enabled supply chain partners and customs authorities to have real-time access to information about products and shipments as they were travelling along the supply chain. Further piloting is taking place at company and country level to refine and develop best practices.

"The Implementation Guide will help ensure RFID tags are manufactured to withstand the rigors of a global supply chain, and ultimately provide end-users with an improved understanding of how to apply EPC Gen II RFID technology to transportation assets so they can increase visibility and efficiency in both global and local supply chains," said Hollis.

The full guideline can be downloaded from [http://www.epcglobalinc.org/standards/implementation\\_guidelines/](http://www.epcglobalinc.org/standards/implementation_guidelines/).

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## Notes for editors

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GS1 EPCglobal is a subsidiary of the global not-for-profit standards organization GS1, and supports the global adoption of the Electronic Product Code as industry-driven standards to enable accurate, immediate and cost-effective visibility of information throughout the supply chain.

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