

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**A Consortium of 31 global organisations supported by the European Commission
launches a three year project in
RFID application research and development**

Brussels, Belgium, 12 July 2006 - A three year initiative dedicated to research, development, training and demonstration in the effective use of RFID based on EPCglobal standards, launched in Brussels. The Building Radio frequency IDentification solutions for the Global Environment (BRIDGE) project is being supported by the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6) with €7,5 million funding.

Coordinated by global data standards body, GS1, the BRIDGE project brings together a consortium of 31 global organisations. Participants in the programme comprise universities in Europe and China, including three of the Auto-ID Labs, solutions providers, both large and small, together with large scale retailers, manufacturers and SMEs.

"Since its inception, RFID has been hailed as the panacea for a more sophisticated and efficient global supply chain, but there are many questions to answer before this is realised," said Henri Barthel, technical director at EPCglobal and BRIDGE project Co-ordinator. "Cross-industry participation in such a large scale project is a key to its success. The BRIDGE project will transform RFID from being an identification technology into providing an EPCglobal based product information network."

The BRIDGE project will focus on business-based research, provision of information services and

hardware (sensors, tags) and software development. This will lead to pilots, deployment and comprehensive training materials in the use of RFID in a variety of business sectors.

In anti-counterfeiting – development of new services in the EPCglobal network will reduce the level of piracy of goods, which is a serious problem in Europe,

In healthcare - increasing patient safety by improving traceability, and certifying the pedigree of pharmaceutical products as they move from the manufacturer to the final user,

In the textile industry – better fulfilment of customers needs by increasing the flow and accuracy of information through a global supply chain,

In food manufacturing processes – reducing waste and stock holding and improving visibility and traceability of both products and equipment, thereby improving food safety,

In re-useable assets – improving information exchange and asset management between supply chain partners to effect reduction in losses and costs,

In products in-service – developing systems and processes to increase the reliability of the upgrade, repair and replacement processes throughout the life of many products,

In the retail environment – optimising processes in retail stores in order to increase service to the customer by using RFID on consumer sale units.

This is a great opportunity for Europe to build on a standardised RFID technology for use in global supply chains. The BRIDGE project will help make this happen by contributing to the development of new solutions for all businesses, from small to large. Improving skills and expertise on RFID technology and network information sharing will lead to enhanced competitiveness of European companies and to benefits to customer and citizen.

Notes to Editors

BRIDGE consortium members:

GS1 Global Office – Project Co-ordinator.

Six GS1 Member Organisations – GS1 UK, GS1 Spain, GS1 France, GS1 Germany, GS1 Poland, GS1 China.

Five research laboratories – Auto-ID Lab Cambridge, UK; Auto-ID Lab Fudan University, Shanghai, China; Auto-ID Lab ETH Zurich/St Gallen, Switzerland; Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain; Technical University, Graz, Austria.

Twelve solution providers - BT, SAP, AIDA Centre, CAEN, Confidex, CETECOM Spain, UPM Raflatac, VeriSign UK, Melior Solutions, Unisys, Domino Printing Sciences, JJ Associates.

Seven business end users - Carrefour, Nestlé UK, Benedicta, Kaufhof, Sony, El Corte Inglés, Gardeur.

For more information visit www.bridge-project.eu and contact henri.barthel@gs1.org.

About the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6)

The BRIDGE project is funded under the FP6 Information Society Technologies (IST) work programme supporting research into the development of 'Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Networked Businesses'. The strategic objectives of FP6 are to strengthen the scientific and technological bases of industry and encourage its international competitiveness while promoting research activities in support of other EU policies.

ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/pdf/fp6-in-brief_en.pdf

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