

PRESS RELEASE NO. 1

ESSENCE *Easy Services to Shape and Empower SME Networks in Central Europe*



10 partners, coming from various regions and backgrounds and having different experience, share the same problem: **how to address the present problem of enterprises' lack of efficiency**.

Therefore **6 CENTRAL EUROPEAN regions** decided to cooperate and find a common solution to that problem, by **more effective use and integration of ICT in business processes for making companies more innovative and competitive** in today's market.

Through ESSENCE project, those partners aim to **create an ICT platform offering solutions for SMEs in reaching their transport effectiveness, reduction of environmental burden and thereby for overcoming their present deficits and increasing their competitiveness**.

ESSENCE project is implemented since July 2012 till December 2014 within CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and co-financed by European Regional Development Fund.

Project Partnership

Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Region (Wielkopolska, Poland) as the Lead Partner,
 Institute of Logistics and Warehousing (Wielkopolska, Poland),
 Province of Bologna (Emilia-Romagna, Italy),
 Institute for Transport and Logistics Foundation (ITL) (Emilia-Romagna, Italy),
 S.A.T.A. Advanced Technology Application srl (Emilia-Romagna, Italy),
 Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH (Leipzig-Halle, Germany),
 University of Leipzig (Leipzig-Halle, Germany),
 AREA m Styria GmbH (Steiermark, Austria),
 SINERGIJA Development Agency (Pomurje Region, Slovenia),
 ICEG RESEARCH AND POLICY Public Benefit Nonprofit Plc (Közep-Magyarország, Hungary).

Project website

<http://www.essence-project.eu>

This project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF.



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COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



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DEVELOPMENT FUND

ESSENCE addresses undertakings acting in different industrial sectors with the support of partners, suppliers and subcontractors, constituting a great number of collaboration networks. They lead their own supply networks and behave at the same time as suppliers or subcontractors of higher-level customers. In these roles the intended companies are normally effective in satisfying customer requirements, but they lack in efficiency because of a limited investment capability and the operational difficulties arising from their poor access to knowledge and suited ICT solutions.

A major barrier to solve these problems and unlock the companies potential is the absence of a considerable offer of well-matched ICT solutions. There is a need to support them in taking decisions on ICT adoption and in providing information on the business opportunities they offer. Furthermore, due to the economic crisis many companies have reduced their ICT budgets and downsized or cancelled projects.

This calls for a major advance in the capacity, for companies, to adopt a more efficient network coordination model and to easily access a wider knowledge base and adequate eServices. In other words, in spite of their ability to produce and export high quality products and flexibility of adapting to ever changing market conditions, they risk their position in the global market unless they undertake a continuous innovation process that let them increase work profitability by removing bottle-necks and inefficiencies. ESSENCE intends to face these critical problems by developing and deploying a solution based on the easy and free access of companies to knowledge, new organisational models and intelligent eServices. The proposed solution will help each of them to shape its own supply network, coordinate and operate it, optimise the generated transports, and evaluate behaviours to find out inefficiencies.

More in detail, the devised eServices made available by the ESSENCE project will include the following functions:

- communication channels based on chat/voip services, mobile access and automatic message generation;
- eCatalogue with SME profile and offer, trust building mechanism and demand-offer matching;
- network shaping based on distributed process modelling and what-if simulation;
- network planning from order management to task assignment and transport optimisation;
- network operation with process and transport monitoring and exception handling; and
- biz doc management including biz doc generation, exchange and translation.

The common knowledge base will include:

- a multilingual folksonomy of technical terms to describe products and their main features,
- a multilingual ontology of concepts and terms supporting the automatic translation of business documents, and
- up-to-date performance indicators for companies, networks and platforms.

ESSENCE approach is based on a partnership of the private and public institutions from Poland, Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Slovenia. They represent different areas of activities: from local/regional public authorities responsible for policy making, business support organisations, to research & technology development entities, dealing with logistics, transport and ICT.

ESSENCE partners want to encourage the local/regional public authorities and other relevant stakeholders to take up the role of initiators of eBusiness, eNetworking and eLogistics innovations within their policies to promote practical ICT knowledge and eService provision in favour of economic development and environmental protection.

The day-by-day work is implemented in six work packages, as listed below:

- WP 1: Project management and coordination.**
- WP 2: Communication, knowledge promotion and dissemination.**
- WP 3: Joint strategy for SME network shaping and empowerment.**
- WP 4: Transnational eServices for SME networks.**
- WP 5: Pilots cases of eServices use by SME networks.**
- WP 6: Roadmap for joint management of eServices provision.**