

EcoLaserFact



“The North-West Europe Research Centres and Universities join forces to support the take up of laser micro-machining technology”

Mons, Belgium – 1st June 2012 – The new global challenges that European Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are facing currently concerning the production of goods require technology advances aimed at the highest standards in manufacturing at lower cost and with respect of the environment.

To address this necessity a number of European Research Centres and Universities took the initiative of creating a Network of Expertise in laser micro-manufacturing specifically targeting SMEs in North West Europe (NWE).

The initiative, launched on 10th May 2012 with the name of ECO-LASERFACT (**ECO**-efficient **LASER** technology for **FACT**ories of the future), funded under EU Interreg IVB NWE framework, has the objective to facilitate the transfer of know-how to SMEs for improved eco-friendly and cost effective laser based processes.

In order to achieve a critical mass and the needed variety of expertise, the project will federate NWE Research Performers that are involved in laser micro-manufacturing. The approach will stimulate greater entrepreneurship and translation of innovation and knowledge into fully marketable products, processes and services.

With the help and services provided by NWE laser Institutes the SMEs will be able to validate solutions based on the latest advances in laser micro-manufacturing to produce highly functional and innovative products by an easy and cost effective access to on-demand processing and equipment. The project gives the opportunity to SMEs for gaining experience in micro-fabrication in the context of their specific application requirements. A transnational laser platform for feasibility tests, based on the specific equipments available in the laboratories of the Research Performers, is offered for free to the interested industrial partners.

The undertaken coordinated actions will improve the competitiveness of manufacturing NWE based companies via the implementation of a more flexible, cost-efficient and eco-friendly approach for production. The strategy adopted is aligned with the recommendations of the European Union in its Economic Recovery Plan, i.e. "to increase the use of technology in manufacturing in order to help EU manufacturers across sectors, SMEs particularly, to adapt to global competitive pressure by increasing the technological base of EU manufacturing through the development and integration of the enabling technologies of the future, such as engineering technologies for adaptable machines and industrial processes, ICT, and advanced materials" (excerpt from European Economic Recovery Plan, Brussels 26.11.2008, COM(2008) 800).

Project's partners: (Belgium) Multitel, Sirris, Wallonia Photonic Cluster, Vito; (Germany) KIT, blz; (France) Irépa Laser, EPIC; (United Kingdom) University of Cardiff, University of Birmingham.

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