



## **PRESS-RELEASE**

### **BRINGING INNOVATION CLOSER TO SME SECTOR THROUGH OPTIMISATION IN TRANSPORT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

Last month, on 18th and 19th of September, partners gathered around the project “Collaborative Framework for energy efficient SME systems” or shortly named “Co-Efficient” met in Lyon (France) for the second Partners’ and Steering Committee meeting. The project, started in January 2013 co-financed by the European Commission within the European Territorial Cooperation MED Programme, targets the SMEs, policy makers and innovation facilitators in the area of Mediterranean. Lead partner of the project is the University of Maribor (Slo), which coordinates the implementation of activities in partnership with the Regional Development Agency Mura (Slo), Institute for Transport and Logistics (It), National Confederation of Crafts and Small and Medium Enterprises Modena Province Association (It), SATA Advanced Technology Application (It), Valenciaport Foundation for Research, Promotion and Commercial Studies of the Valencian region (Sp), CIERVAL (Sp), AFT Regional Delegation of Rhone Alps (Fr), Regional Development Agency of Slavonia and Baranja (Cro) and Centre for Entrepreneurship Osijek (Cro).

Main objective of the project is to advance innovation and already available technologies for transport optimisation, energy efficiency and use of renewable resources, in operations and production processes of SMEs. “Co-efficient” builds upon the outputs of the KASSETTS (Central Europe Programme) and eBEST (FP7) projects through the software solutions for production and logistics SMEs. Software on Distributed Planning, Logistic Service and Document Data Extraction will be additionally tested and provided to SMEs in order to achieve energy consumption savings through collaborative ordering and order consolidation.

The experience from previous projects shows that one of the crucial problems is that there is not enough communication and coordination between the R&D sector and SME systems, which evidently prevents technology and know-how transfer. Especially if compared to large companies, SMEs are generally slow to adopt innovative solutions. The project aims to empower SMEs to communicate their business problems related to energy efficiency and use of renewable resources in production and operations to partners, R&D organisations and stakeholders and



develop customised solutions according to these needs. In order to assist this process project will support the set-up of a living lab environment, active in all partner countries in which SMEs as final users and R&D organisation as the main developers will collaborate to develop new solutions for better use of energy in production and operations. The salient feature of living labs as such is that they seek to put the final users of innovations in the centre of the product/service development process, which assures a solution customised to user needs. In each regional/national context, the partners will involve local SMEs business cluster interested to co-create new ICT services and support the “Co-Efficient” policies undertaking through the involvement of policy makers. Moreover, “Co-Efficient” will engage multi type SMEs sectors for co-creation, bringing wide energy efficiency skills and competences for energy savings coming from different types of MED supply chains.

The project activities are mainly focused on the Valencia region in Spain, the Rhône Alpes region in France, the Emilia Romagna region in Italy, Slovenia (entire country), and Central and Eastern Pannonia in Croatia. However, the project will not be limited to these regions and will in fact be gradually disseminated and capitalised in the entire Mediterranean, especially through transnational networking of SMEs, R&D organizations, and other stakeholders.