



# USE&DIFFUSE

## Newsletter

### No. 3/2010

**Towards excellence  
in research  
dissemination and  
exploitation**

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### **USE & DIFFUSE: The end of the project marks just the beginning for SME research capability**

**USE & DIFFUSE** is a project that was co-financed by the European Commission, under Framework Programme Seven, and, as its title suggests, it aims to support the dissemination and exploitation of results resulting from research projects involving small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The USE & DIFFUSE initiative gathered information on and analyzed current practices in terms of the use of RTD results in projects involving SMEs in order to draw upon best practice and guidelines that can be carried forward and disseminated to benefit existing and future R+D effort involving industry. **At the end of July 2010 the project will come to its close after 30 months of duration.**

A central Project component was the creation of a practical, public accessible Best Practice Manual or Guide entitled “**Make European Research Work For Your Company**”. This practical and complete Guide provides SMEs (and Research Performers) with a step by step approach to ensuring that they get the most out of the results of R&D projects and that they put all the right pieces in place in order to be well prepared to uptake and manage the resulting IP. Readers of the Guide will benefit from a close look at success stories and case studies, methods and approaches for creating an effective strategy for the dissemination and exploitation of RTD results, as well as advice on how to realistically tap into the real market potential of research results. This complete Guide ensures that **SME’s have access to an important tool that can contribute to their more effective participation in EU funded projects.**



## Leading the “whey” in sustainable packaging ...



**Interview with Mr. Robert Carroll, Project Manager**

**PIMEC, Spain**

**Coordinators of the WHEYLAYER project**

**Robert, maybe you would like to give our readers an insight into the WHEYLAYER project?**

WHEYLAYER is an exciting 3 year R&D project that is funded under the Research for SME Associations. The core aim of this cooperative research project is to replace currently used synthetic barrier layers with whey protein coatings. In other words to make plastic film out of whey. Recent studies reveal that whey, a by-product of cheese production, acts as a good oxygen and moisture-barrier film with similar performance to other petro - chemical based coatings. In addition, the use of whey coating on plastic films can improve the recyclability and reuse of the plastic layer by removing the whey protein enzymatically. Furthermore, the incorporation of active substances such as anti-microbials and antioxidants in the new WHEYLAYER-based packaging solutions will enable the shelf life of packed foodstuffs to be extended. This trans -European project wants to arrive at suitable

whey coated plastic films and process to obtain this new material, without compromising the barrier performance of conventional plastic films.

*... The core aim of this cooperative research project is to replace currently used synthetic barrier layers with whey protein coatings. In other words to make plastic film out of whey...*

**That sounds very exciting indeed. I imagine it has generated a lot of interest from the packaging industry?**

Yes, there has been quite considerable interest shown in the project to date. The packaging industry realises that the impact of this project could indeed be considerable

and quite revolutionary. There is a huge need to increase the recycling of packaging and this is one of the main challenges of current multilayer films, which are not possible to recycle. Packaging producers and users also recognise that the industry cannot in the long term continue to rely purely on synthetic petroleum-based materials for a host of economic, political and environmental reasons. So I think the industry appreciates that WHEYLAYER would give packaging an outstanding added value by replacing the use of non-recyclable petroleum-based plastics with a natural by-product, which would safeguard the performance and enhance the recyclability of plastic films.

**Have there been any major challenges in managing a project of this size?**

This project has a large consortium comprised of 14 partners, consisting of SME Associations, SMEs from the packaging value chain and the RTD Performers. As with any large consortium, there have of course been some challenges along the way, such as for example one partner having to drop out in the early stages (which can lead to quite an administrative headache). Each partner has a unique interest and stake in the project and whereas in many large projects it can be a challenge at times to reconcile each partner's individual interest and motivation in WHEYLAYER, fortunately in WHEYLAYER, there is a real good synergy between the respective



interests of all the participants as they cover the whole supply and value chain and will all contribute to bringing the new material to the market and will jointly benefit from it. Essentially in managing a project of this size and nature, we have to not only manage the realities and expectations of the industrial partners, but all merge each partner's role into one coherent engine to drive forward the research work required during the project's duration. The projects strength however lies in the depth and diversity of its partners.

### **What in your opinion are the benefits for associations and their members by being involved in such a research programme?**

SME associations want to provide their members with opportunities to innovate and remain competitive, especially during these turbulent economic times. In reality SMEs often do not have the capability and resources to undertake research, especially when it embraces an inter-disciplinary nature. A research programme such as this affords SMEs the opportunity to participate in a worthwhile project with the potential to exploit and own the intellectual property that may be derived from it. This research programme uses a problem in one industry (*whey, which can lead to disposal challenges for dairy farmers*) to improve a product in another (*packaging industry*) resulting in a win – win situation for both. SME Associations and SMEs that participate in such research programmes utilise their collective strength to solve a problem or improve a process in their industry; in this case a novel whey-based material to replace co-polymers, as well as a commercially feasible technique for producing and processing with this new material .

*...SME associations want to provide their members with opportunities to innovate and remain competitive, especially during these turbulent economic times...*

### **How is the intellectual property being managed?**

In the project's early stages an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Manager was appointed from among the participating SME Associations, who is responsible for presiding over all issues relating to the protection and use of the IPR resulting from this project. Agreements regarding Intellectual Property are discussed internally among the industrial consortium, and will be signed prior to project completion to ensure that WHEYLAYER is commercially exploited to the full. All these activities are accompanied by discussions and actions aimed at properly protecting the Intellectual Property and developing a suitable and robust business plan for the exploitation of results.

### **If there was anything you could change about the project or the funding scheme?**

Well I think that this funding scheme offers a comprehensive vehicle that enables industry to carry out research. I don't really think that I would change that much. Well, maybe less administrative burden! In WHEYLAYER we are fortunate in that we have a wide ranging consortium that covers all aspects of the research more than adequately. Quality partners = a Quality project = a Quality result!

### **Would you do it all again?**

**Undoubtedly! To coordinate and participate in a project such as WHEYLAYER has been a privilege and our participation opens up a world of possibilities for our plastic films and packaging manufactures.** Pending the outcome of the final results of the project, there is significant interest by the current consortium members to undertake a follow up project. WHEYLAYER 2 project. WHEYLAYER has attracted a lot of interest among our packaging members in PIMEC. Just today I received a call from an interested packaging manufacturer who wanted to know when he could start using the new material. ...So, its onwards and upwards!

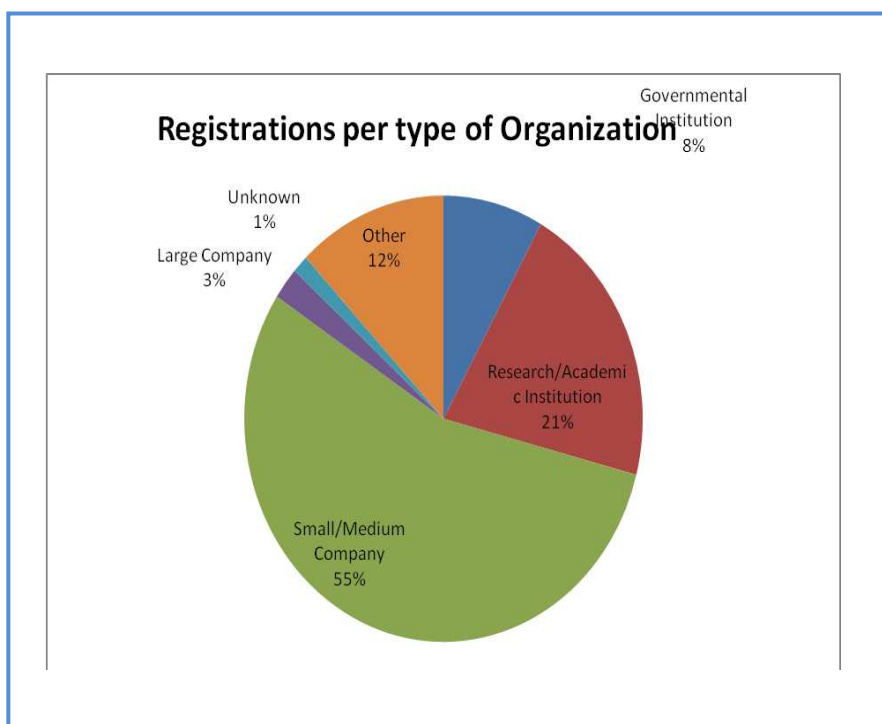
**For more information about the WHEYLAYER project, please visit: [www.wheylayer.eu](http://www.wheylayer.eu)**



## Over 2500 organizations and 8000 professionals have benefited from the Use and Diffuse Manual: “Make European Research Work For Your Company”

Among the main objectives of the Use and Diffuse project was the development of a best practice manual in the area of the exploitation and dissemination of research results involving SMEs, as well as implementing strategies aimed at reinforced exploitation of RTD results and clustering of projects on common topics to improve interaction and joint dissemination and exploitation activities. It is expected that this guide will add significant value to the European research effort and its results will serve to enrich RTD activities involving SMEs.

To date, some 2180 Institutions from 66 different countries from all over the world have downloaded the electronic version of the Manual. The majority of downloads are by Small/Medium Companies (55%), with the remainder comprising Research/ Academic institutions (21%), Other Institutions (12%), Governmental Institutions (8%), and Large Companies (3%). It is estimated that to date the manual was read by more than 8000 individuals worldwide.



**The electronic version of the manual can still be downloaded free of charge from the project website:**

**[www.useanddiffuse.eu](http://www.useanddiffuse.eu)**



## Hot off the press!...the Use and Diffuse Manual has been professionally published



After a last round of edits, the Use&Diffuse partners released the final version of the Manual last May. It was quickly snapped up for publishing by Steinbeis Edition in Germany. The first edition of the “Strategic Guide to Successful Use and Dissemination of the Results of Research and Development Projects: Make European research work for your company... “ comprises 10,000 copies that will be distributed by the Use&Diffuse consortium.

To get your hardcopy drop us a line at any of the contact details provided on the last page of this newsletter.

Alternatively, the manual can be also ordered through the following distribution channels:

### Amazon:

[http://www.amazon.de/Strategic-Successful-Dissemination-Research-Development/dp/3941417274/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books-intl-de&qid=1278404453&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.de/Strategic-Successful-Dissemination-Research-Development/dp/3941417274/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books-intl-de&qid=1278404453&sr=1-1)

### Steinbeis-Edition:

<http://www.stw.de/>



## Use and Diffuse Study Visit: Karlsruhe, 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2010

The last study visit of Use&Diffuse was organised in Karlsruhe, Germany by Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum. The study visit in Karlsruhe was the third and final event of the Use and Diffuse project, following successful study visits in Luton in December 2009 and in Valladolid in February 2010. It is estimated that at the three study visits were attended by more than 200 SMEs.

The central theme of the Karlsruhe study visit, that gathered together SMEs, cluster organisations, and energy agencies from around Europe, was “ICT applications to improve energy efficiency in buildings and production”. Some 35 organisations participated in the visit and had the opportunity to network, share experiences and learn about R&D opportunities in the field.

During the morning session kicked off with each participant having the opportunity to introduce their organisation, showcase and discuss their experiences in relation to research and development projects, share best practice examples with regard to the exploitation of R&D projects’ results, as well as discuss innovative products, technologies and project concepts together. By lunchtime, much excellent networking and business had been done!

After this first round of presentations, the Use&Diffuse manual was presented to the audience and everybody received a hard copy. In addition, the morning session included a brief presentation of upcoming funding opportunities in the field energy efficiency (7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme - PPPs Call Energy-Efficient Buildings), as well as the introduction of a software prototype to optimise energy consumption and energy management.

*“...Over 200 SMEs gained valuable information from their participation in the three study visits...”*

In the afternoon, a visit was made to the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. Researchers of the Institute of Applied Informatics and Formal Description Methods presented a very exciting and timely pilot project MeRegio (<http://www.meregio.de/en/index.php?page=index>), which deals with smart grids and energy-efficient technologies. For the purposes of the project a “Smart-Home” has been built and KIT researchers talked the participants through the main intelligent energy-efficient concepts and technologies that have been integrated into this novel Smart Home.

As the attendees originated from different kinds of organisations dealing with energy efficiency aspects from varying perspectives, the study visit fomented a cross-fertilisation effect which, according to the participants, was highly useful for identifying complementarities and also served to explore potential cooperation paths that have paved the way for future collaborations.



**“A day in the life of an SME coordinating an EC funded R&D project ...”**



**Interview with Ms. Hilal Unal, Project Manager  
GOKSER MACHINE LTD, TURKEY  
Coordinators of the ULTRAVEG project**

**Hilal, can you tell the readers a little bit about the ULTRAVEG project that you are coordinating?**

The aim of this project is to develop a high power ultrasound system that will enable the low-cost, fast, effective and quality drying of fruit and vegetables. ULTRAVEG is a 2 year R&D project funded under the Research for SMEs programme.

The European Food Industry is made up of 280,000 companies, of which 99% are SME's; it is worth some €800 billion and employs 4 million workers. Food dehydration, or drying, is a major food processing activity and dried fruits and vegetables are increasingly used as an ingredient in many foodstuffs. Food drying is one of the oldest, simplest, and most effective ways of preserving foods. Sun-drying of fruit crops has remained largely unchanged since ancient times but there are several commercially available drying methods like hot air drying and vacuum drying.

*... our company has become well-known as a result of the dissemination activities of the project. The company has gained prestige and our relationships with universities have developed...*

There is a need to provide companies involved in food dehydration with a technology that will help them overcome the limitations that are currently squeezing European SMEs out of the food drying sector. They need access to affordable technology that will reduce the treatment time of

the drying process, reduce energy consumption and improve the quality of the final food.

**Now that the project is coming to an end, are there any plans for using the results post project?**

Yes, we have some clear plans to use the project results. Post project the prototype will now need to be further developed in order to supply a competitive commercial product to the industrial arena. So, along with other members of the consortium, we will work towards taking to market a product that can be readily adapted to existing systems...and of course it will need to be cost effective, both in terms of its capital and running costs.

**Do you feel that the project has brought benefits to your company, or will do so in the future?**

The project will bring commercial benefits to our company in the future. For now our company has become well-known as a result of the dissemination activities of the project. The company has gained prestige and our relationships with universities have developed.



### How have you found the coordination of the project? Has it been tough?

The project has been managed with the support of IRIS, our Spanish partner, so it has not been very hard for us. But, as an SME, there are many other activities going on in the company that we have to deal with. Sometimes it has been hard to spend time on the project.

### Are there any tips or advice that you would like to share with SMEs who are thinking of leading or getting involved in an EC funded R&D project?

It is very important for SMEs to keep in mind that via these projects they are getting the opportunity to solve technological problems. Technological know-how is what they will have once the project ends. They will also have exploitation potential, long-term increases in competitiveness and economic benefits, networking opportunities and the chance to exchange their experiences and knowledge.

In order to obtain all these benefits, SMEs need to spend time on the project – sometimes even more than they might have initially imagined! They also have to be able to act as good conductors of the orchestra. Since the projects are international, they have to work with different cultures and different people. This makes the working environment unique. Also, SMEs need to be aware that a good idea does not always mean success...they may have to try several times to improve their ideas. And last but not least, they have to be the bridge between industry and academia. If SMEs manage to think as academics, they can easily understand what they say and can steer academic duties according to project goals.

*SMEs need to spend time on the project – sometimes even more than they might have initially imagined! They also have to be able to act as good conductors of the orchestra.*

### How have you found the relationship with the RTD Performers during the project?

The relationship with the RTD performers has been very good. I think the key thing is to be a strong bridge between academia and industry. If you can achieve this, then you will have a good relationship with the RTD performers.

I am lucky because I spent 3 years in academia after my graduation and since then I have been working in an industrial environment at an SME. This helps me to understand both sides' needs...essentially, I feel that I can work as a "translator" between academia and industry.

### Would you do it all again?!

Yes, we would definitely do it again! It was been one of the most exciting experiences for our company!

**For more information on the ULTRAVEG project, please visit: [www.ultraveg.eu](http://www.ultraveg.eu)**



## Funding Opportunities for SME's:

### FP7 – Research for the Benefit of SMEs

SMEs make up a large part of Europe's economy and industry. The EU's 23 million SMEs account for 99% of all businesses and contribute up to 80% of employment in some industrial sectors. The Programme FP7-Research for the benefit of SME's aims at developing technical solutions to problems common to a large number of SMEs in specific industrial sectors or segments of the value chain, through research that could not be addressed under Research for SMEs.

FP7 proposes actions to increase the participation of SMEs in research and offers them measures that will facilitate their access to research results. Other advantages for SMEs taking part in FP7 will include higher funding rates, a wider choice of funding schemes, the acquisition of new knowledge and increased potential for new products and services.

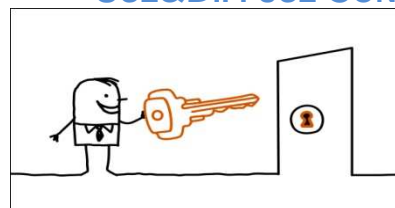
The programme is divided into three main research activities, which are:

- Research for SMEs: targeting mainly low to medium technology SMEs with little or no research capability, but also high-tech SMEs who need to outsource research to complement their core research capability.
- Research for SME associations: targeting associations which act on behalf of their SME members to identify and address common technical problems and to promote the effective dissemination and take-up of results.
- DEMO: The DEMO action will be implemented for the first time and it aims at bridging the gap the research and the market, and it is funding demo actions, such as testing of products etc.

**The call of proposals is expected to come out soon and the deadline for submission will be for December 2010.**

Documents and additional information about the open calls are available on the following webpage:  
[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CapacitiesDetailsCallPage&call\\_id=36](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CapacitiesDetailsCallPage&call_id=36)

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