

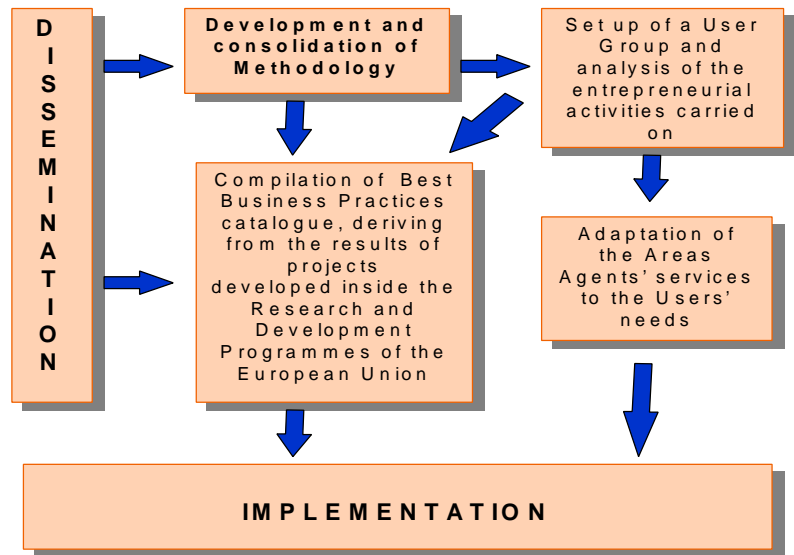
Executive Summary – Edited Final Report

IS 98029 - IS4SMEs

Area Agents to launch Manufacturing SMEs into the Information Society

SHORT DESCRIPTION AND GRAPHIC/PICTURE

The **IS4SMEs** project – financed under the **PROMISE** Programme of the European Commission – aims at bringing small and medium enterprises in the manufacturing area closer to the concept of **Information Society** and supply them with the necessary ICT tools accomplish this.



Context

In the frame of the rapid global market-place development and in order to promote the adoption of skills and tools deriving from the Information Society, the IS4SMEs project intends to encourage innovative **ICT-based** solutions, new methodologies and an entrepreneurial culture enabling SMEs to exploit

Information Technology. An **Area Agents** led by ETAss and UIL in Italy and Siii in Portugal, has been established with the goal to improve, through designed support actions, the competitiveness of the European SMEs and to make them aware to the benefits of ICT.

Objectives

The main objectives of

IS4SMEs are to promote the use and adoption of ICT-based solutions in the manufacturing SMEs and to encourage them to approach e-services for enhancing their competitiveness face the challenges of the global market. IS4SMEs also fosters dissemination and awareness raising actions aimed both at promoting any innovative solution and best practice derived

by already funded EU-RTD joint projects, and to encourage SMEs to take part into new programmes and actions furthered by the European Commission.

Process

The project has been mainly focused at pointing out enterprises' strengths and weaknesses regarding ICT use and implementation. Through the design of an innovative **methodology**, an assessment questionnaire has been carried out and tested on two SME user groups established both in Italy and Portugal. ETAss and UIL in Italy and Siii in Portugal have properly selected a number of enterprises in the manufacturing area lacking ICT-based tools and solutions. These two groups based in two relevant industrial districts in the Lombardy region (I) and in the Lisbon region (P) have thus received the visit of the consortium members who have assessed them and reported the results of the assessment. The following analysis has allowed the refinement of

the questionnaire, so to deliver a final self-assessment questionnaire; and to provide the companies interviewed with customised **Action Plans** aimed at improving their performances in managing ICT solutions.

Results

An user group of SMEs has been involved in the project. The Area Agents located at the head office of ETAss in Milan and with its Portuguese arm at Siii in Lisbon enables SMEs to be supported with customised services and direct actions. A catalogue of **23 Best Business Practices** has been created in order to aware SMEs of the innovative ICT-solutions given through EU-RTD funded projects already implemented. A **web-site** has been designed with the goal to disseminate the IS4SMEs tools and services and to inform SMEs about the opportunities offered through specific RTD Programmes of the European Union. **6 seminars** and **workshops** have been organised; **2 Newsletters** have been delivered; **6 Action Plans**

provided and **5 new EU-RTD projects** set-up.

Impact and achievements

IS4SMEs has promoted dissemination and awareness raising actions supported by the EPSILON umbrella. Further companies have required to be tested by means of the IS4SMEs assessment tool; a "**Club of SMEs**" has been set up gathering those companies interested to the Area Agent services; the establishment of a permanent and self-sustainable Area Agents creating awareness in ICT solutions for SMEs has been positively evaluated.

Contact Details

Project Name:

IS4SMEs – Area Agents to launch Manufacturing SMEs into the Information Society

Timescale:

01.01.99 - 31.12.99

Keywords:

Information Society – SMEs – Best Business Practices – ICT solutions – Action Plans – Awareness raising – Dissemination actions

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ETAss	(I)
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