



## PRESS RELEASE: THE FIRST PROJECT HAS COMPLETED ITS PHASE 1

The FIRST project has completed its phase 1. It was the phase for the creation of a map of existing experiences and best practices used at the SME and its supply chain levels. In fact, during this first phase, based on the outcome of the various decisions taken, the partners:

- 1) defined criteria to be used as a base for the development of a research framework. In particular, the partners decided the research methodology to be used and gave the consortium the necessary input to then together develop the research framework that could support the consortium during the data gathering phase of the FIRST project;
- 2) defined the criteria to select the companies that should be contacted during the data gathering phase in order to base the results of the project on “good” practices from within the furniture industry. The partners discussed the selection of a list of companies that the consortium deemed to be key to understanding how these companies were able to stay competitive within an ever changing business and consumer landscape.
- 3) selected the companies based on prior defined criteria to be involved in the data gathering phase of the FIRST project.
- 4) developed the case study and questionnaire methodology that became at the heart of the subsequent data gathering phase. They developed both a case study and questionnaire methodology subsequently used during the data gathering phase that were geared to gather information from a sample of companies of the EU furniture industry related to the five areas of analysis that the consortium deemed important. These areas were (i) New product development/Innovation; (ii) Supply chain management; (iii) Cooperation; (iv) Human resource management; (v) Outsourcing. Consequently, the partners generated all the necessary material for the consortium to subsequently contact the sample set of companies and carry out an analysis of these five areas of the companies with the intention to gather data from different typologies of companies that could then be analyzed in the second phase of the FIRST project.
- 5) Fine-tuned the case study and questionnaire methodology based on feedback obtained from both the consortium partners and, more importantly, the consortium’s steering committee: A committee that was chaired by the prime contracting partner and project coordinator and saw the proactive involvement of a panel of furniture manufacturers who were involved to support the consortium towards the better analysis and development of methods and tools that could be usable by SME’s in the furniture industry.
- 6) Conducted several case studies based on the methodology it developed in the furniture industry sector. They were proactively involved in the identification of EU companies that could be interesting to analyze for the FIRST project, contact these companies and subsequently conduct the detailed analyses related to the case study and questionnaire methodologies defined and developed within the first phases of the data gathering process of the FIRST project.

7) Drafted case study reports format that were then used by the consortium to gather in a uniform way the information gathered during the data gathering phase

These results are essential for the future phases of the project that should use them to develop tools easily understandable and usable by the furniture manufacturers.

MORE INFORMATION ON <http://www.ueanet.com/first/default.htm>

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