



PRESS RELEASE: THE FIRST PROJECT HAS STARTED ITS NATIONAL CONFERENCES

The project's objective is to develop and to offer to furniture manufacturers a methodology that can be implemented through various innovative tools and that allow them to easily enhance their capacities to restructure their activities maintaining or generating profitability and avoiding social losses in a fast-changing world.

For the FIRST project, the adopted type of innovation is the process-oriented innovation. Based on existing management theories (benchmarking, (out)sourcing, supply chain management, innovation integration), the partners are developing tools that are proposed to the small and medium-sized enterprises of the furniture sector.

The tools that are developed by partners are quite practical and will allow manufacturers to make the right choice - analyzing all costs - and should be a key factor in sustaining companies' competitive advantage.

Best practices (during restructuring phases) have been identified, and projects' partners have started the development of step-by-step tools (based on best practices and also on innovative management approaches) that address restructuring/outsourcing decisions in a consistent and a step-by-step approach.

They are presented in a series of 10 national conferences to be organized in 10 different EU countries by 2008. The first conference was already organized in Porto on December 13th, 2007 and in London on February 28, 2008. Additional ones are programmed for 2008: in Milan in April 2008, in Thessaloniki in May 2008, in Brussels in June 2008, in France in June 2008, in Francfort in 2008, in Valencia in September 2008, ... Information can be found under "EVENTS" in the FIRST website: <http://www.ueanet.com/first/events.htm>

The workshops are organized in three different steps:

1. Presentation of participants and brainstorming about the various guidelines (innovation, product development, supply chain management, human resources concepts, ...)
2. Presentation of the FIRST methodology and tools
3. Feedback of the SME and of the trade association

SEE ALSO <http://www.ueanet.com/first/events.htm>

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