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ePedigree Pilot kicks off - a first for European Pharma

New electronic track and trace pilot system for the European Pharma market gets under way – reduction in medication errors, improved supply chain management and drug counterfeit protection are the key goals.

Reading, UK, 14 September 2006

A new electronic track and trace pilot system for the European pharmaceutical market was kicked-off today. The system, known as the ePedigree Pilot, aims to demonstrate the implementation and benefits of the 'electronic pedigree' for pharmaceutical products based upon "mass serialisation" for all levels of packaging, using automatic identification and data capture techniques with a mix of data carriers using linear and 2D bar codes and RFID tags.

The pilot system is a component of a broader Integrated Project called BRIDGE, a European Union funded initiative, led by GS1, aiming to facilitate the implementation of RFID/EPC technologies in Europe through research, pilot testing in various sectors as well as training and dissemination tools. It is also one of the current series of pilots being conducted by GS1 Europe's Healthcare Initiative.

The ePedigree Pilot promises to set a new benchmark for the pharmaceutical market in the drive for improved patient safety and supply chain efficiency. The use of automated techniques for medicine identification will enable greater certainty of the medicine administration process – right product, to the right patient, at the right dose, at the right frequency, at the right time by the right route. Furthermore, unique data carriers can provide accurate linkage to the patient healthcare records and back-office systems and can result in significant supply chain improvements and cost reductions.

The concept of the 'electronic pedigree' as a counterfeit deterrent measure is being actively encouraged by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) in the US and indeed forms part of the regulatory framework for several federal states, such as Florida and Nevada. Such systems are new to Europe but with the increasing threat of counterfeit products reaching the mass European medicines market, electronic pedigree systems with all the traceability benefits they imply, are expected to become the norm.

Effectively, the pedigree for a particular medicine pack is created by the original manufacturer and automatically supplemented with tracking information by each trading partner as the product flows along the supply chain resulting in a full traceability log, known as the *chain of custody*. Such systems rely on the unique identification of products by encoding data in specific carriers such as bar codes, composite codes (Data Matrix or RSS) and RFID tags. Scanning, reading and data capture mechanisms, linked with network-based

systems, will enable each partner in the supply chain to confirm the product's authenticity and add their own relevant data such as chain of custody, storage or distribution details. GS1's open supply chain standards coupled with data exchanges using EPCglobal's network standards will form the kernel of the system.

A mix of solution providers – Domino, JJ Associates, Melior Solutions, Unisys and VeriSign, all supported by GS1 UK – are involved in the project, together with several major pharmaceutical companies and related organisations including Actavis, Athlone Laboratories, TjoaPack, UDG/Alloga, Celesio and Barts and The London NHS Trust. Others are expected to join shortly.

The pilot is expected to be completed by Autumn 2007 when all the results and experiences will be widely published.

Notes to Editors

BRIDGE consortium members:

GS1 Global Office – Consortium Co-ordinator.
Six GS1 Member Organisation's – GS1 UK, GS1 Spain, GS1 France, GS1 Germany, GS1 Poland, GS1 China.
Five research laboratories – Auto-ID Lab Cambridge, UK; Auto-id lab Fudan University, Shanghai, China; Auto-ID Lab ETH Zurich/St Gallen, Switzerland; Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain; Technical University, Graz, Austria.
Twelve solution providers - BT, SAP, AIDA Centre, CAEN, Confidex, CETECOM, Spain, UPM Raflatac, VeriSign UK, Melior Solutions, Unisys, Domino Printing Sciences, JJ Associates.
Seven business end users - Carrefour, Nestlé UK, Benedicta, Kaufhof, Sony, El Corte Inglés, Gardeur.
For more information visit www.bridge-project.eu and contact henri.barthel@gs1.org .

The BRIDGE Project

The Building Radio frequency IDentification solutions for the Global Environment (BRIDGE) project is being supported by the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6) with €7,5 million funding. It is a three year initiative dedicated to research, development, training and demonstration in the effective use of RFID based on EPCglobal standards and is being supported by the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6) with €7,5 million funding.
The BRIDGE project will focus on business-based research, provision of information services and hardware (sensors, tags) and software development. This will lead to pilots, deployment and comprehensive training materials in the use of RFID in a variety of business sectors.
In anti-counterfeiting – development of new services in the EPCglobal network will reduce the level of piracy of goods, which is a serious problem in Europe,
In healthcare - increasing patient safety by improving traceability, and certifying the pedigree of pharmaceutical products as they move from the manufacturer to the final user,
In the textile industry – better fulfilment of customers needs by increasing the flow and accuracy of information through a global supply chain,
In food manufacturing processes – reducing waste and stock holding and improving visibility and traceability of both products and equipment, thereby improving food safety,
In re-useable assets – improving information exchange and asset management between supply chain partners to effect reduction in losses and costs,
In products in-service – developing systems and processes to increase the reliability of the upgrade, repair and replacement processes throughout the life of many products,
In the retail environment – optimising processes in retail stores in order to increase service to the customer by using RFID on consumer sale units.
This is a great opportunity for Europe to build on a standardised RFID technology for use in global supply chains. The BRIDGE project will help make this happen by contributing to the development of

new solutions for all businesses, from small to large. Improving skills and expertise on RFID technology and network information sharing will lead to enhanced competitiveness of European companies and to benefits to customer and citizen.

About the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6)

The BRIDGE project is funded under the FP6 Information Society Technologies (IST) work programme supporting research into the development of 'Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Networked Businesses'. The strategic objectives of FP6 are to strengthen the scientific and technological bases of industry and encourage its international competitiveness while promoting research activities in support of other EU policies.
ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/pdf/fp6-in-brief_en.pdf

About GS1

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