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European collaboration to fast-track success of organic and large-area electronics

Europe's leading organic and large-area electronics (OLAE) organisations have joined forces in the Framework 7 project COLAE, which aims to speed up the commercialisation and adoption of organic and large area electronics by promoting collaboration between industry clusters throughout Europe. COLAE will utilise the resources and know-how of the project partners to provide tools and services for the existing organic electronics industry, as well as supporting the entry of new players.

The OLAE market is expected to grow swiftly, with leading forecasters predicting a worldwide industry worth up to \$96bn by 2020 (IDTechEx, 2011) as it promises the opportunity for low cost manufacturing of electronic circuits on rigid or flexible substrates leading to the creation of an innovative range of products such as flexible displays, large-area lighting, logic & memory, sensors, batteries, smart bandages, intelligent tickets, low-cost solar cells and entirely new physical forms for functional electronic devices. Ilkka Kaisto of VTT, the project coordinator says, "The COLAE collaboration will allow Europe to remain at the forefront of developing this key technology area, while driving future advancements in highly lucrative markets".

COLAE will provide training events for newcomers to the technology as well as for experienced researchers and production staff. "We aim to help Europe's OLAE technologists stay at the leading edge. We need a strong and growing talent pool in order to compete on a global level," says Chris Rider of The Cambridge Integrated Knowledge Centre (CIKC). COLAE will also provide training to stimulate entrepreneurship within the sector.

COLAE will help companies assess the viability of implementing their product ideas using OLAE technologies, with technology feasibility analyses covering a wide range of topics from IPR landscaping to product design and cost estimation. In addition, COLAE will assist companies in accessing pilot production facilities located throughout the COLAE network.

The COLAE project will create a 'virtual foundry' which will offer a networked hub of expertise and facilities that can be accessed by companies across Europe. Martin Raditsch of InnovationLab in Germany says "This is a real opportunity for business to de-risk their development by not investing in facilities until their product is ready for large scale production. The partners bring together a real variety of knowhow and services which together can provide integrated solutions for the industry".

As well as assisting OLAE organisations, COLAE will focus on raising awareness with end users. "We have a remit to get end users interested in using organic electronics in their products. These technologies can revolutionise some of the main application areas but the manufacturers may not realise that the opportunities are out there," says Ed Van Den Kieboom of Innovation Fab in The Netherlands.

“This project involves some of the key movers and shakers in the OLAE industry, and together we can make a real difference to the pace of commercialisation and adoption for this exciting technology” said Martin Walkinshaw of CPI in the UK.

Additionally, COLAE will identify the most important research and development needs and challenges and the most promising new application areas for OLAE, with the aim of providing guidance for future R&D investments and funding strategies.

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Notes to Editor:

COLAE (Commercialisation Clusters of Organic and Large Area Electronics) is a €3.2m Framework Programme Seven project. The project is made up of 18 partners from 12 countries:

- VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland (Finland)- <http://www.vtt.fi/>
- CPI - The Centre for Process Innovation (UK) – <http://www.uk-cpi.com/>
- Cambridge Integrated Knowledge Centre (UK) - <http://www-g.eng.cam.ac.uk/CIKC/>
- Ghent University (Belgium) - <http://www.ugent.be>
- Centre for Nanotechnology and Smart Materials (Portugal) - <http://www.centi.pt/>
- TNO Holst Centre (Netherlands) - <http://www.tno.nl/> & <http://www.holstcentre.com>
- InnovationFab (Netherlands) - <http://www.innovationfab.com/>
- CSEM Swiss Center for Electronics and Microtechnology (Switzerland) - <http://www.csem.ch>
- InnovationLab GmbH (Germany) - <http://www.innovationlab.de/>
- Organic Electronics Saxony (Germany) - <http://www.oes-net.de>
- Fraunhofer EMFT (Germany) - <http://www.emft.fraunhofer.de>
- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece) - <http://lfn.physics.auth.gr/>
- Joanneum Research (Austria) - <http://www.joanneum.at/>
- NanoTecCenter Weizmann Research (Austria) - <http://www.ntc-weiz.at>
- Cetemmsa Technology Centre (Spain) - <http://www.cetemmsa.com/>
- Acreo (Sweden) - <http://www.acreo.se/>

- Plastipolis (France) - <http://www.plastipolis.fr>
- Commission for Atomic Energy and Alternative Energy (France) - <http://www-liten.cea.fr/>

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