

## **Working Group Z2: Streamlining supply chain operations through RFID technology**

Working Group Z2 objectives can be summarised to the following three statements:

- To explore and record the state of the art in RFID both in technical (standards, solutions, products) and business (existing commercial and research initiatives) terms.
- To identify how RFID technology can re-transform traditional supply chain management processes and spot new areas (and sectors) of application.
- To investigate the current adoption trends of RFID technology by Greek enterprises operating mainly in the retail, transportation and logistics sectors.

The Working Group (150 participants in total) has organized four internal meetings to present current Greek initiatives and discuss on the prospects of the emerging technology to the aforementioned sectors. These meetings also identified the existing limitations of the technology in terms of technical constraints and current price levels. Moreover, in order to identify the current status and future trends in the aforementioned sectors, the Working Group organized a quantitative survey at a national level. The questionnaires were electronically disseminated to multiple companies through: (a) The International Society of Logistics (SOLE, Athens Chapter) ([www.eel.gr](http://www.eel.gr)), which is a non-profit international professional society aiming at enhancing the art and science of logistics technology, education, and management and (b) the Efficient Consumer Response (ECR Greece), a joint trade and industry body aiming to make the grocery sector more responsive to consumer demand and promote the removal of unnecessary costs from the supply chain ([www.ecr.gr](http://www.ecr.gr)). The questionnaires were also dispatched to all members of E-Business Forum Working Groups E4 and Z2.

The Working Group received 27 responses mostly from large companies that had some past experience with RFID. All participants highlighted the benefits of RFID in downstream and upstream activities. Efficient inventory management and supply chain visibility are two of the most important benefits. Technology immaturity and current price levels are the most important inhibitors. Still, the most striking finding refers to the willingness of Greek companies to start investing on RFID in short term by initially monitoring the developments and sequentially to participating, or initiating, RFID-based projects.

The suggestions of the Working Group to both the private and public sectors can be summarised to the following:

Suggestions to the government:

- Generate awareness regarding the prospects of RFID technology mainly through articles in trade magazines, organisation of information days / events and focused presentations / speeches to exhibitions or relevant trade fairs.
- Increase consumers trust by informing them on the use of RFID in Fast Moving Consumer Goods and developing policy schemes that will ensure the protection of their privacy.
- Provision of incentives through R&D programmes provided by the 'Information Society' or the General Secretariat of Research and Technology (GSRT).
- Provide special fiscal treatments, as an additional incentive, for those companies that invest on RFID technology.

Suggestions to the business sector:

- Create priorities pertaining the business processes which will be enhanced by RFID. Emphasise initially to upstream activities by developing pilots and then expand to downstream processes.
- Identify whether the current technical infrastructure may support the massive amount of data generated by RFID. Consult your technology partner to get informed on the latest developments.
- Maintain close links with standardization bodies in order to follow the most up-to-date standards.
- Inform your personnel on the prospects and potential applications of RFID. Work with them to identify additional areas of application.