"smeSpire" Project

June 15th, 2012

We are pleased to announce the successful kick off of a NEW European funded project.

"smeSpire - A European Community of SMEs built on Environmental Digital Content and Languages" held its inaugural meeting in Ispra, Italy at the beginning of May.

smeSpire is a two-year Support Action of the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission for Research and Technological Development, funded by the Directorate General Information Society and Media within the EC's SME initiative on digital content and languages.

Epsilon Italia is the project coordinator, leading a consortium from 12 member states composed of 15 partners (8 of whom are SMEs).

The main aim of the project is to support geo-ICT European SMEs to capitalize on the benefits of the INSPIRE Directive, which "establishes an infrastructure for spatial information in Europe to support Community environmental policies, and policies or activities which may have an impact on the environment".

This will be achieved through several actions, the most important being: 1) an assessment of the market potential for geo-ICT SMEs in relation to INSPIRE; 2) training packages, usable within an e-learning platform, designed to train professionals working in the management of environmental digital content related to INSPIRE; 3) a Best Practice catalogue in the field of the management of environmental digital content across Europe; 4) dissemination events organized in each of the participating 12 Member States to spread the results at national and local level; 5) a network of SMEs and other institutional stakeholders aimed at bridging the gap between the INSPIRE driven demand for environmental digital data and the industry-driven offer of geo-ICT solutions, stimulating, encouraging and facilitating the participation of SMEs; 6) a business model aiming at enabling already established and new geo-ICT SMEs in Europe to convert technological innovation which is inside the INSPIRE implementation process into economic value; 7) a database containing information about the geo-ICT SMEs in Europe, useful to map competences from SMEs across Europe and to conduct business intelligence studies and analysis; 8) general awareness about the importance of interoperability, about the EIS/EIF (European Interoperability Strategy/European Interoperability Framework) and about relevant results from the EC ISA programme (Interoperable Solutions for the European Public Administrations).

The smeSpire project will be presented at the INSPIRE Conference 2012 which will take place in Istanbul from 23 to 27 of June, within a dedicated workshop entitled "Are SMEs ready to capitalize INSPIRE benefits?" in which several SMEs will tell their success stories.

Further project details and updates are available at www.smespire.eu.