

## Realising business potential through transnational technology partnership



Weda's robot with the Mariner underwater camera fitted.

A Swedish firm, Weda, wanted to equip its underwater robots with low-cost cameras.

Its local IRC identified relevant technology offers in the network's database.

One offer, from the client of a Greek IRC, fit the bill exactly.

Together, the two IRCs arranged for Weda to visit the Greek technology development company, Mariner.

Under a technical co-operation agreement, Mariner developed a new digital camera system for Weda's robots.

Since the original deal, it has also developed a pan and tilt system which Weda is currently testing.

*"Having a top-class Swedish firm as a client is a real bonus for our company,"* says Marinos Pittas of Mariner.

Mariner's miniature underwater pan and tilt system.



More than a hundred IRC Success Stories can be browsed at

<http://irc.cordis.lu/success/>

## IRC Network – Quick facts

**240 offices in 33 countries** – every EU Member State, plus Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Iceland, Israel, Norway, Switzerland and Chile.

More than **1,000 experienced specialists** with backgrounds in business, industry, research and technology commercialisation.

**9,000 technology offers** and **2,800 technology requests** circulated to IRC client companies.

Over **7,300 client companies** have benefited from the network's technology profile email alert system...

...leading to more than **16,000 technology transfer negotiations**, resulting in **4,000 IRC clients signing 'deals'** since 1995.

## Further information

Visit the IRC Network's **website** at <http://irc.cordis.lu/>

Find your **nearest IRC office** at <http://irc.cordis.lu/whoswho/>

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Norway

Poland

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Slovenia

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

Turkey

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Building Technology Partnerships



# Innovation Relay Centre Network

Regional competitiveness through international technology partnerships



## What is the Innovation Relay Centre (IRC) Network?

Rapid development of regional economies' innovative potential is a key component of the European Union's strategy for growth and employment. The strategy's relaunch in March 2005 focuses the attention of European policy-makers at all levels on the central priorities of **knowledge and innovation**.

Too often, new technologies are too slow to reach the companies which could exploit them in the marketplace. The developer of a technology and its potential users may be based in different countries, and have no way of finding out about one another. For the two companies, this represents a missed opportunity for improved competitiveness. For the regions in which they are based, it represents a real **brake on economic and employment growth**.

The IRC Network was established by the European Commission in 1995 to address this market failure by **connecting knowledge, technologies and people**. The network's pan-European brokerage service now spans 33 countries, including all 25 EU Member States. It provides SMEs and other companies with expert local assistance, helping them to benefit from international technology partnerships.

## How does the IRC Network operate?

IRCs offer an **integrated brokerage service**, providing SMEs, universities and research institutes, as well as larger companies and the public sector, with a unique gateway to international partnership opportunities.

From the analysis of technology needs right through to support for transnational commercial negotiations, IRC experts can deliver the specialised help needed to bring about profitable **licensing, manufacture, distribution, exploitation or joint development** deals based on the transfer of technology between partners in different countries.

Perfected over a decade, the integrated IRC service is based around the matching of a technology offer from a client in one country with the technology needs of a client in another. The service depends both on a **powerful online database** and on the professionalism of IRC staff and the **relationships of trust** which they have developed with the innovation actors in the regions they serve.

In many regions of Europe, IRCs have already established themselves as the **business service of choice for innovative firms**.

## A European network with international contacts

The IRC Network serves multinational corporations and maintains links with other technology transfer networks. It is active in exploiting synergies between **industrial clusters**, to which it offers the full IRC service, assisting regional clusters to participate in transnational activities.

## Impacts on employment and growth

A recent study of the network's socio-economic impacts found that, in the regional economies that they serve, **IRCs create value approximately 1.8 times greater than the total public funding** committed by the European Commission and their own national or regional authorities.

This calculation of network added value is based exclusively on documented increases in turnover and jobs directly attributable to technology deals brokered by IRCs, and takes no account of 'collateral competitiveness gains' which arise from the improved innovative capacity of IRCs' client firms. But IRCs are also key agents for increasing innovation awareness in companies, and key vectors for **collaboration between a region's industrial community and its research base**.

The IRC Network acts as a catalyst for innovation and, by supporting knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of new technologies, is **helping Europe's countries and regions to realise their full economic potential**.

<http://irc.cordis.lu>