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ITEA 2

Eureka cluster ITEA 2 is a market-oriented initiative designed to boost European R&D in software-intensive systems and services, which are crucial to a wide range of products including cars, aircraft, mobile communications and household appliances.

The programme was launched in 2006 to expand the existing Information Technology for European Advancement Eureka cluster, a successful eight-year programme that funded 85 projects involving 400 participants with a total budget of 1.2 billion euros. By 2013, ITEA 2 is expected to more than double its predecessor's achievements, distributing 3bn euros to support 200 projects involving 800 participants.

ITEA 2 extends the scope of ITEA by addressing novel emerging applications in cognitive, bio and nanotechnologies. Other strategic areas of ITEA 2 are the standardisation of systems and the development of new technology standards.

A two-day ITEA 2 symposium in Berlin on 18-19 October discussed how technology can tackle societal challenges like the ageing society and climate change.

The growing focus on projects dealing with societal changes will likely lead to more projects like Ambient Ecologies (AMEC), which built a house with an embedded "ecosystem" of interconnected devices. AMEC won the 2007 ITEA Gold Achievement Award at the symposium.

"Societal impact is getting increasing weight in new initiatives. But this is not a sudden change, rather a gradual development," says Fopke Klok, director of the ITEA 2 office.

Another goal of ITEA 2 is to increase the participation of SMEs alongside large companies, research institutes, and universities. In the next few years, ITEA 2 expects the number of SMEs involved to increase, eventually accounting for 50 per cent of all partners.

"We see a trend where increasing numbers of SMEs become partners in ITEA projects with one or two big companies as leading partners," said Klok.

ITEA 2 is a two-phase programme, with four calls for proposals in each phase. Projects will last up to three years. The second call for proposals ended in March 2007. The dates for the next call, scheduled for early 2008, will be announced later this month. As an industry-driven programme, the areas prioritised for research are assessed by the companies involved with ITEA 2.