

01.12.08

Grant boosts for SME/academic collaborations

The Integrated Products Manufacturing Transfer Network (KTN), jointly with the Innovative Electronics Manufacturing Research Centre (IeMRC) is pleased to announce the results of the 2008 call for SPARK Awards. Six more projects will benefit from the awards, which are designed to build relationships between small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and higher education institutes (HEIs).

The grants, which are of a fixed value of £5,000, are awarded to the relevant HEI to tackle a problem of direct relevance to the SME. Since their inception in 2002, they have had an excellent track record of developing longer term relationships between educational institutes and the business community.

The latest projects to receive awards are:

- **Trackdale Ltd / Heriot-Watt University:**
The funding will be used to validate the optical performance of a selection of Trackdale QD / polymer composites. The data will be used for a number of applications including predicting the efficiency of a novel luminescent solar concentrator system which may challenge the standard flat-plate silicon PV technology – the current industry benchmark.
- **Olberon Medical Innovations Limited / Nottingham Trent University:**
The design, development and manufacture of a prototype hand held otorrhinoscope. An Otorrhinoscope (also known as an auriscope) is a medical device that is used to look into the ears. A rhinoscope is a medical device that is used to look into the nasal passages. This device will do both jobs.
- **Oxsensis Ltd / University of Greenwich:**
This project will contribute to the development of complex sensors for use in ultra harsh environments such as combustion chambers which are so high the sensors themselves glow “yellow-hot”. The sensors enable accurate, dynamic measurement of pressure and temperature simultaneously at temperatures in excess of 1000°C, hundreds of degrees above anything commercially available.
- **Laser Physics UK Ltd / Aberystwyth University:**
The SPARK Award will fund the trial of liquid crystal optical components in the Aberystwyth prototype imaging ellipsometer in place of the existing physically rotated parts. This could allow the development of a new generation of real time imaging ellipsometers for medical screening, biochip readout and materials research applications.
- **Micropathology Ltd / Warwick University:**
The project will help develop a new method to calibrate of thermo cyclers used in the polymerase chain reaction replication of DNA. A thermo-

cycler typically contains a tray of 40 vials. The current method of calibration is to put a single thermometer into a single vial with radio transmission of temperature data. The objective of the proposed project is to create an infra-red temperature scanning device which can monitor and calibrate the temperature variations and performance of a thermo-cycler enabling investigation of the variation in amplification in relation to temperature distribution

- **The Magstim Company Ltd / University of Leeds:**

Stroke is the commonest cause of severe disability in the EU. The Solution – Designing Home-based Rehabilitation Equipment: The funds will be used to help home-based rehabilitation technologies that can support appropriate therapies that are administered by the user/patient, whilst being guided and monitored by the therapist.

Paul Palmer, Director of the IPM KTN, says, 'I would like to congratulate the four pairs of winners of the 2008 SPARK Awards. We received a great deal of high quality applications, showing how many innovative ideas are out there seeking modest amounts of funding for their development. We will, of course, make follow-up contact with the runners-up, as well as the winners, to see if we can help them too.'

Applications for SPARK awards are actively encouraged within in the areas of design, development and manufacture of complex products with integrated electronic and mechanical function. The awards have been designed with minimal bureaucracy, in keeping with the value of the grant. The next call for SPARK Awards from is planned for November 2009. For further details please visit: <http://www.integratedproductsktn.org.uk/>.

Membership of the IPM KTN is not necessary, but is recommended to ensure that all future announcements are received.

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Notes to Editors:

The Knowledge Transfer Networks are a Technology Strategy Board programme. Details about all the KTN networks may be found at www.ktnetworks.co.uk.

For more information on the Technology Strategy Board visit www.innovateuk.org.

The Integrated Products Manufacturing KTN has evolved from the PRIME Faraday Partnership which has been in successful operation for over ten years. For further details, see www.integratedproductsktn.org.uk

Please note that the Technology Strategy board has requested that we avoid using the abbreviation IPM KTN until 2009 to avoid potential confusion with IPM-Net, the former abbreviated name of the Environmental KTN. The inquisitive will find that the family of domain names www.IPMKTN.org.uk is functional but auto-forward to the preferred name above.

The technical scope of the KTN covers the design, optimisation and manufacture of complex integrated products where intelligence needs to be incorporated alongside mechanical functions. Achieving this requires competences in electronics manufacturing technologies alongside mechanical design and manufacture, polymer processing, optics and other skills.

The KTN is a partnership that draws upon complementary skills from Loughborough University, The University of Nottingham and research and technology organisation Pera. The Network has also extended its European links by encompassing the internationally renowned TEG Fraunhofer Institute as an associate partner.

The KTN is a publishing house and commissions reports for its Technology Watch library from expert authors. These reports are available free of charge to all registered members (and registration is free). Our links policy (see legal link in the footer of every website page) encourages links directly to these reports from any website to maximise their availability through third party websites.

*Current news items are also published via an RSS news feed at:
<http://www.integratedproductsktn.org.uk/news.php>*

The IeMRC is one of 16 Innovative Manufacturing Research Centres (IMRCs) set up and supported by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), focussing on the electronics manufacturing sector. For more information please visit: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/iemrc/>

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