



DUNDALK COMPANY BLUEACRE TECHNOLOGY IN €4.3M EU PROJECT TO DEVELOP NEXT-GENERATION SURGICAL DEVICES

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OPENMIND is a major new EU research project aiming to create a production system for customised and metal-free minimally invasive medical devices (MIMDs). MIMDs, such as micro instruments and guide wires, play an increasingly important role in diagnostic and surgical medicine. They are used mainly by surgeons navigating and operating in the circulatory system without having a direct view. However metal devices are not compatible with MRI and with 10 million people each year getting an MRI scan for diagnostic purposes there is a large market to service.

Blueacre Technology will be working on the project with 8 other European technology companies, from countries including Germany, France and Italy. The OPENMIND team includes Fraunhofer Institute for Production Technology IPT (project coordinator), Diribet spol. s.r.o., IRIS Innovation Research Industrial Sostenibility, Fondazione Politecnico di Milano, Nano4imaging GmbH, Tamponcolor GmbH, Gimac International and ICS In-Core Systèmes.

OPENMIND is hoping to create the first flexible process chain for customised medical device manufacturing. This process chain will close the gap between efficiently produced 'off-the-shelf' products and individually customised products, enabling the production of small batches. The project is hoping to reduce lead-in and process development times.

It is developing these devices using fibre-reinforced plastics which offer multi-modal compatibility for X-Ray, CT and even MRI. Many state-of-the-art minimally invasive devices contain metals or metal pieces that are not compatible with MRI scanning machines.

Dr David Gillen, Managing Director, Blueacre Technology, commented "We are delighted to be working on this cutting-edge EU technology project. Since 2006, Blueacre has invested consistently in research and development and engineering. This expertise in developing and manufacturing laser micromachining equipment and working with polymers has helped us secure the funding for this exciting and important research.

“This specialised area of medical device manufacture has tremendous potential to improve the efficiency of interventional surgical medicine. By making it easier to design and produce metal-free minimally invasive medical devices, the project could lead to significantly improved diagnoses and treatment of cardiac disease and reduce the €45 billion annual cost of lost productivity in the EU associated with it.”

David Gillen, Managing Director, Blueacre TechnologyThe first project they will work on is the development of a guide wire. Guide wires are essential tools for many minimally invasive procedures, such as cardiac interventions. Cardiovascular diseases are still the number 1 cause of death globally but at the same time, more and more people survive heart attacks and strokes due to repair of lesions using minimally invasive methods such as stenting, valve replacement and resolving aneurysms. With the outcome of the OPENMIND project transferred to other kinds of minimally invasive devices, physicians will be able to work with tailored tools every day.

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Web article at <http://irishtechnews.net/ITN3/dundalk-company-blueacre-technology-in-e4-3m-eu-project-to-develop-next-generation-surgical-devices/>