

The INNOBANK project: bringing e-services to the financial sector



Since the beginning of 2005, ESBG has been part of a large consortium led by La Caixa (Spain) that has been performing the INNOBANK project. This market validation project is funded by the European Union under the 'e-TEN' programme

and examines innovative aspects of the use of four technologies developed by the consortium, e-invoicing, off-premises ATMs, biometric identification and authentication, and flexible work organization in bank branches through the use of secure wireless communications.

The overall aim of the project has been to promote e-commerce in a broad sense, and to contribute to eliminating paper in business transactions, with better access and traceability, fewer errors, and higher transaction security. The consortium included two banking partners, La Caixa and Fortis Bank (Belgium) who undertook user needs analyses, service specifications, and field trials, plus development of theoretical business plans for internal implementation; two research partners, Fraunhofer Institut (Germany) and University of Stuttgart (Germany) who performed market analyses, positioning of the services in global banking scenarios and success criteria definition; plus four technology partners, Fujitsu, Siemens, TB Solutions and Wincor Nixdorf, responsible for service development and fine-tuning, technical support during trials and development of business and deployment plans for commercialisation of INNOBANK services outside the participating banks. ESBG was involved in pan-European aspects of the project, including analysis of regulatory frameworks in the EU, market analysis review, and information dissemination. Full details of the project may be found on www.innobankproject.org/innobank/login.jsp.

Following almost two years of development and piloting the technologies tested under the project, INNOBANK is now in its final stages.

On 13 and 14 November, the results were presented at a workshop in Barcelona attended by nearly 200 people from across Europe, including members of ESBG's Banking Technology Committee. The project technologies were presented, and discussions also surrounded broader developments and trends in European banking technology. Keynote presentations included an address delivered by Mr. Norbert Bielefeld, ESBG Deputy Director Payment Systems, offering a framework proposal for the development of e-powered financial services in the Internal Market, and a Round Table was chaired by Ms Fiona Joyce, ESBG Deputy Director Business Cooperation, addressing technologies and innovation as keys to success in banking.

A common message conveyed by many of the speakers was a plea for harmonisation of legal frameworks across Europe relating at a broad level to the whole order to cash process and more specifically to the regulations surrounding the specific technologies being tested.

Workshop presentations are available on the project website above, and televised proceedings and interviews may be viewed on www.tb-channels.com/innobank/.

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