



**KEY TERMS** NFC, ITEA2, Artemis

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**KEY MESSAGE** New ICT technologies are being developed in pan-European research projects

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**MORE INFORMATION** [www.itea2.org](http://www.itea2.org), [www.artemis-ju.eu](http://www.artemis-ju.eu), [www.sofia-project.eu](http://www.sofia-project.eu)



# NEW ICT SOLUTIONS THROUGH PAN-EUROPEAN EFFORTS

European research programmes are developing new technologies that offer important opportunities for business, including NFC technology. With the help of VTT, SMEs also have a chance to stay one step ahead of their competitors.

**Text** Jarmo Lahti **Photos** iStockphoto, Jarmo Lahti

A good example of a technology that provides new business opportunities is the Sofia (Smart Objects For Intelligent Applications) project. Sofia is part of Artemis, a Joint Technology Initiative that focuses on embedded systems. The core of the project is the novel Smart-M3 concept, which was demonstrated at the end of last year in Madrid, at the joint event of the ITEA2 and Artemis programmes.

At the event in Spain, the VTT-run NFC project SmartTouch was awarded the prize for the best ITEA2 project. In the ITEA2 programme, systems and services based on computer software are developed through pan-European efforts.

Although the NFC technology has yet to match the ambitious expectations set for it, there is every reason to believe that it will.

NFC, or Near Field Communication technology, is based on radio-frequency identification (RFID), which works over a distance of just a few centimetres. Unlike in traditional RFID solutions, an NFC device can act both as a reader and an identifier.

The most promising application opportunities and markets are connected with different types of mobile phone solutions when NFC phones are launched in large volumes.

Nokia, for example, is just starting to embed NFC in its phones based on the first successful models.

## **Fara reaches the global market through SmartTouch**

Companies that have already done their homework and established a contact network will enjoy a prominent position when the NFC market is up and running.

Fara Oy, an Oulu-based company with 17 employees, participated in the SmartTouch project in 2006–2008, with resources totalling some four person-years.

"We believe that ITEA cooperation is an important element that can help us to begin international activities, increase contacts and utilise technology," says **Antti Jurvelin**, who is responsible for Fara's sales operations in Finland. He started at Fara, which is now under Swedish ownership, in 1994, at which point the company was called Buscom. It was known for its travel card system deliveries to the Helsinki metropolitan area, for example.

According to Jurvelin, Fara has completed many successful projects. For example, the company piloted the NFC public transport ticket in Oulu and developed an NFC-based inspector application and a concept for re-charging public transport tickets via Internet. Fara has also examined and developed payment concepts, such as the introduction of the EMV chip card technology in NFC ticket systems.

Fara is currently involved in the Smart Urban Spaces project, which develops and pilots different types of public transport service models.