

Europe's First EPCglobal Test Center Gears Up

Metro Group and GS1 Germany have announced that their EPCglobal-accredited testing facility will be up and running by the end of October.

By Jonathan Collins

Sept. 30, 2005—According to its founders [GS1 Germany](#) and [Metro Group](#), Europe's first [EPCglobal](#)-accredited test center will be up and running in Germany by the end of October.

Metro Group and GS1 Germany set up the RFID Test Lab as part of EPCglobal's [Performance Test Center Accreditation Program](#). EPCglobal has also accredited three other test centers: the Pacific RFID Performance Solutions Center in Hsinchu, Taiwan; [Kimberly-Clark's](#) Auto-ID Sensing Technologies Performance Test Center in Neenah, Wisc.; and the [RFID Research Center](#), a unit of the [Information Technology Research Institute](#), Sam M. Walton College of Business, [University of Arkansas](#), in Fayetteville, Ark. The four centers were awarded the accreditation several weeks ago, during an EPCglobal US conference in Atlanta (see [EPCglobal Certifies Gen 2 Hardware](#)).

The new, 300-square-meter (3,229-square-foot) German facility will be located in the same building as the Metro RFID Innovation Center in Neuss that debuted in July last year (see [Metro Launches RFID Test Center](#)). That center is open to any Metro supplier that wants to explore currently available RFID technology and test how its RFID plans will integrate with Metro's deployment.

The new GS1-sponsored lab, on the other hand, will be a separate entity, accessible to companies from all industries looking to deploy RFID. Initial work at this lab is expected to revolve around fast-moving consumer goods. "The lab will have more specialized testing within a different room, with different equipment and [a] different staff and organization behind it," says Andreas Fübler, senior project manager for EAN standards at GS1 Germany.

Equipment at the lab will include an anechoic chamber for eliminating extraneous RF radiation; a GTEM (GigaHertz transverse electromagnetic) chamber for creating a uniform electromagnetic field over a broad bandwidth in a shielded environment; a spectrum analyzer; signal generators; simulation software; and a range of EPC UHF RFID tags and readers (interrogators).

Access to the lab will be through GS1 Germany, and interested businesses will be required to pay to obtain services. Charges, however, have yet to be determined.

The goal of the test center is to provide a place where European companies from any industry can evaluate the performance of various tags on pallets and cases of products and individual items. They will also be able to determine the effectiveness of various readers and other RFID hardware. The testing will be conducted according to standardized procedures as specified by EPCglobal.

According to GS1 Germany, the RFID Test Lab will also carry out research driven by the work undertaken by users at the center. The lab will reportedly share the results of that research with the international EPCglobal

community.

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