

# Startup Seeks to Kick-start RFID in Trinidad

RFIDTT wants to help the oil-producing Caribbean country move to a knowledge-based economy, and is hoping RFID will be the catalyst.

By Beth Bacheldor

Feb. 13, 2008—RFID Trinidad & Tobago (RFIDTT), a small startup company in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, is hoping to foment the use of RFID in the southern Caribbean country. RFIDTT—a spin-off of [Label House Group Ltd.](#), a 25-year-old packaging and labeling company headquartered in Trinidad—will specialize in RFID systems integration, and plans to work with a variety of organizations in both the government and private sectors, on applications ranging from asset tracking in health care to supply chain tracking in the petroleum industry.

To help strengthen its RFID expertise and knowledge, the firm is partnering with several organizations. The McMaster RFID Applications Lab (MRAL), a research laboratory at [McMaster University](#) in Hamilton, Ontario, will provide consulting services to RFIDTT, such as technology development and research, expertise in business-process reengineering and intellectual property (IP) assistance. The lab, supported by [EPCglobal Canada](#) and several vendors offering RFID products and services, will also help RFIDTT as it works with customers. This will include assistance with gathering and understanding user requirements, selecting and testing appropriate RFID products, and project management.

Trinidad and Tobago may not seem the likely spot for leading-edge technology such as RFID. In fact, says Pankaj Sood, manager of MRAL, that's what colleagues believed when RFIDTT first approached the university research lab. "We had some of the same impressions before we got involved," Sood says. "When you think of the Caribbean, you think of it as a tourist destination more than a business destination."

Still, Sood adds, the country—particularly the island of Trinidad—is ripe for RFID. "It has a fledgling economy fueled by oil and gas," he explains. According to the U.S. [Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook](#), Trinidad and Tobago is one of the most prosperous nations in the Caribbean, largely due to its petroleum and natural gas production and processing.

The country's gas and oil industry is one sector to which RFID may be applied. According to Frankly Dookheran, an independent consultant hired by RFIDTT to help set up the company, RFIDTT has already held discussions with firms in that sector to consider using the technology to track assets and processes. RFID could be employed to track cylinders and trucks used to transport natural gas, for instance, as well as the distribution process.

However, Sood says, Trinidad and Tobago is looking to grow its economy beyond oil and gas, and has its sights set on information technology. "The country wants to transform a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy," he states, "and is looking at new applications and tools that they could export—software tools, for example. RFIDTT is trying to do that with RFID."

In addition to partnering with MRAL, RFIDTT is working closely with the [Evolving TecKnologies and](#)

Enterprise Development Co. (e Teck), a government-created enterprise focused on developing new businesses, including those in information and communications technologies.

Dookheran says there are plenty of opportunities for RFID's use in Trinidad and Tobago. Last month, he says, RFIDTT held its first seminar, inviting representatives from both the public and private sector. "This was an opportunity for them to sit in a seminar and, for the first time, hear about the potential of RFID," Dookheran says. "We asked the various organizations about the interests they had with regards to using RFID. The most frequent [application] mentioned was asset management, but there were others, such as vehicle registration and health care."

RELATED\_ARTICLES Sood predicts similar demand. "The kinds of projects we expect to see initially will probably all be in public sector, such as in the departments of transportation, health care, and oil and gas," he says. "But there is a wide variety of interest for RFID in Trinidad. They have the same economic drivers as elsewhere. Budgets are being cut, and organizations need to save money and optimize their processes. The RFID component can help them rethink their processes and find new ways to save."

Since the seminar, RFIDTT executives have been following up with attendees. What's more, the company has also met with the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, the agency responsible for regulating communications in the country, to discuss RFID frequencies and regulations. Because the country is in the same region of the world as Canada and the United States, Dookheran says, it will leverage the same RFID frequencies those nations use, such as the 915 MHz ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) band utilized for EPC Gen 2 RFID tags and interrogators.

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