Introduction
This consortium will address the needs of Precision Engineering companies in production planning, scheduling and shopfloor tracking to manage the dynamism of customer orders in this complex high-mix low-volume manufacturing environment. In this environment, increased product variety increases costs (inventory, material handling, production set-up and other overhead costs), and companies are challenged to keep costs down and yet meet customers’ production due dates which are increasingly shorter as many of its customers shortened the order lead time. To date eight Precision Engineering companies had confirmed participation in this consortium which starts in July 2009.

Objective
To develop an integrated software system to better plan, schedule, track and manage the fulfillment of the customer orders and the production processes and maximize resource utilisation.

Scope
The consortium involves the R&D of an integrated production planning/scheduling and shop floor control software system to facilitate the management of available production resources to ensure that company resources are working on the right product at the right time to fulfill customer’s order deadline. The shop floor tracking automates the collection of production execution data and provides an overview of the production status and resource availability.

Benefits
The software system, expected to boost manufacturing capacity utilisation by between 10 to 40% and cycle time reduction by between 20% to 80%, will be tailored to the individual needs of each company. It is planned to license this new technology creating new business opportunities for the system integrators.

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