Chinese participation in the convergence of **digital audiovisual systems**

European Commission
Information Society and Media

The switch over from analogue to digital broadcasting means freed-up radio spectrum – but how will these newly available frequencies be used? The PARTAKE project engaged leading Chinese organisations in standardisation and regulation initiatives which are of strategic importance to the audiovisual sector in Europe.

At a Glance

Projects coordinator:
Dr. Thomas. J. OWENS
Brunel University of West London (UK)
Tel: +47 735 93800
Email: Thomas.Owens@brunel.ac.uk
Project website:
http://www.ist-partake.org/

Partners from:
Brunel University of West London (UK);
DiBcom (FR);
Thales Broadcast and Multimedia TBM (FR);
T-Systems (DE);
Royal Philips Electronics (NL);
Beijing University of Posts and Tele-communications (China);
Institut für Rundfunktechnik GmbH (DE)

Duration:
March to October 2005 (8 Months)
Total cost: €172.8k
EC Contribution: €172.8k

Further information:
IST Research: Networked Audiovisual Systems
DG Information Society & Media
Networked Audiovisual Systems Unit
Tel: +32 2 298 73 97
Email: INFSO-/D2@ec.europa.eu
http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/audiovisual/index.html
Europe's Information Society:Thematic Portal:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society

PARTAKE's objectives

The overall aim of the PARTAKE project was to instigate a long-term research collaboration between leading European and Chinese organisations in the area of Converging Systems. China and Europe have a mutual interest in research exploring the full potential of DVB-T/H to provide low cost access to broadcast Internet content, which will be attractive to very substantial groups of users, particularly in the rapidly emerging Chinese economy.

By disseminating the results of recent European projects and focusing on their significance for China, PARTAKE aimed at promoting the European vision of converging audiovisual systems. Converging Systems enable broadcast content to be received on a mobile phone. Broadcast and telecommunication services converge on a single terminal.

At the same time, the project provided a platform for leading Chinese organisations to present the work they intend to undertake.

A Europe-China dialogue

The Europe-China dialogue took the form of a two day workshop organised in Beijing on the 24 and 25 of June 2005.

Exchange of views on research priorities was complemented by a presentation of opportunities for Chinese organisations to participate

in Europe's IST research activities. The event also enabled participants to meet and explore mutual interests.

In connection to this workshop, a series of project demonstrations of Converging Systems were organised. Some staff from the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT) were invited to Europe for further training at Brunel, R&S, T-Systems, IRT, Thales, DiBcom, and IFA 05 .

In demonstrating a number of IST projects' results, the PARTAKE team emphasized the role of standardization and regulation in enabling a market for Converging Systems. This initiative supported Europe's aim to promote the active participation of leading Chinese organisations in Commission funded IST projects in the field of Converging Systems. Such a close involvement supports their engagement in standardisation and regulation initiatives that are of strategic importance to the private sector in Europe.

Related Initiatives

PARTAKE is a good example of support actions, funded by the Commission's IST research programme. These actions are promoting awareness and take up of our initiatives on a global scale. The initiative furthered Europe's aim to promote active participation of leading Chinese organisations in Commission funded IST projects.

Audiovisual digital convergence

Several European countries have deployed terrestrial digital video broadcasting (DVB-T) and are planning to switch off analogue broadcasting by 2010.

However, there are many competing demands for the use of this spectrum including high definition television services, additional DVB-T services and handheld (DVB-H) services, also known as IP data-cast services, that are essentially low definition television services intended for viewing on handheld terminals such as PDAs (personal digital assistants or pocket computers) and mobile phones.

Research projects funded by the European Commission are exploring the potential of such technologies to foster a more inclusive society, by providing cheap access to broadcast Internet content. This research is supporting the political debate amongst European governments concerning an allocation of spectrum which will balance these competing demands in accordance with their social and economic priorities.

Hand-held, mobile broadband & TV

The potential of hand-held devices to provide localised broadcast Internet content cheaply is of particular interest to emerging economies like China. Such services can be received on cheap mobile phones, essentially downloading reformatted audiovisual content from static DVB receivers and the Internet.

This offers an opportunity to significantly broaden Internet access in the emerging economies, particularly where mobile phones are used in regions that do not have access to fixed-line networks.

In a similar initiative to PARTAKE, the European Commission is funding Brazilian participation in an IST Integrated Project INSTINCT. The project includes five Brazilian partners who are actively interested in cooperation and in the transfer of knowledge, given the growing market for DVB technologies in Brazil.