

For immediate release

## **NEW PRODUCTS STRENGTHEN PRODUCTIVITY OF FINNISH METAL INDUSTRY**

*NewPro programme brings strong business results through customer-driven research*

Helsinki, Finland - April 16th 2008 - Finnish metals technology companies are investing in advanced products to promote sustainable profitability and business resilience. Metal companies are specialising and developing their business opportunities through market-driven networking. By the end of 2009, the Tekes **NewPro** programme aims to double the share of special products in the business portfolios of Finnish steel and other metal producers when compared to 2004 levels.

“The programme seeks to retain and develop the best international know-how on advanced metals technology at Finnish universities and research institutions. The best practices discovered in the research will be implemented in Finnish industry,” said Mr. **Jouko Lassila**, Programme Coordinator, NewPro.

For steel company Ruukki, an innovation developed in the NewPro programme – abrasion-resistant steel – has led to a new product family and investments of over €100m in the company's factory in Raahe, Finland. Abrasion-resistant steel is used, for example, in earthmoving machinery.

“Products such as ultra-high strength steel can make a difference to the environment over their full lifetime. When less steel is needed, payloads can be increased, and the same task requires less fuel. Furthermore, as product lifecycles are extended, less raw material is needed for manufacturing,” said Mr. **Peter Sandvik**, Senior Vice President, Rautaruukki.

The five-year NewPro programme encompasses 19 research projects and 34 enterprise projects, with a total funding volume of approximately €45 million. The aim of the programme is to support companies in developing more profitable product ranges as well as new manufacturing processes and applications. Additionally, companies need to network with universities and other clusters of expertise.

“The NewPro programme is constantly looking for metal industry companies that can utilise the latest expertise in advanced metals technology in their challenging product development projects. These projects can also extend past the end of the programme,” said Mr. Lassila.

Industries that refine and use metals comprise the largest industry segment in Finland, accounting for nearly 50% of all industry revenue and well over half of exports.

The Functional Materials programme is presented at the NMP Finland Conference, held on the 16th and 17th April 2008 at Helsinki Fair Center (Messukeskus), Helsinki, Finland.

The NMP Finland Conference is organised by Spinverse Ltd. The company commercialises emerging technologies by combining scientific, industrial and investment expertise with a broad contact and knowledge base. Spinverse Ltd. coordinates the Tekes FinNano and Functional Materials programmes. The NMP Finland Conference is expected to attract over 400 experts from over 14 countries. A large number of companies will have a presence in the Materia 08 exhibition, the largest technical event in Finland.



For more information about the event, please visit [www.nmpfinland.net](http://www.nmpfinland.net).

Additional information on the Tekes NewPro programme is available at: [www.tekes.fi/newpro](http://www.tekes.fi/newpro) (link to English site in upper right-hand corner)

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Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, is the main government financing and expert organisation for research and technological development in Finland. Tekes finances industrial R&D projects as well as projects in universities and research institutes. Approximately half of Tekes funding is channeled through its diverse range of programmes. [www.tekes.fi](http://www.tekes.fi)

Spinverse Ltd. specialises in commercialising emerging breakthrough technologies. The company brings together leading industry innovators by coordinating the Tekes FinNano and Functional Materials programmes, as well as by organising the annual Nanotech Northern Europe event. Spinverse Ltd. was founded in 2004 and is located in Espoo, Finland. [www.spinverse.com](http://www.spinverse.com)