
[Safeguarding innovation through confidentiality](#)

Terracom Informatics Ltd., an SME based in Ioannina, Greece, is primarily focused on software design and development for security companies. Specialising in in-house software and working mainly on Internet of Things (IoT) technology, Terracom became one of the first companies to receive funding from the SME Instrument programme in the IoT field.

Towards the end of 2014, Terracom introduced QR-Patrol, an innovative real-time security system, boasting efficiency and the ability for potential customers “to upgrade their services via technology” (www.qrpatrol.com/features). In practical terms, QR-Patrol allows guards to scan NFC or QR codes in several checkpoints. In this way QR-Patrol allows the monitoring of the guards as well as real time interaction. Upon Terracom’s announcement of the security system, QR-Patrol received a considerable amount of local attention until due international expansion solidified its position in the software-based security market. Within the inaugural 18 months, QR-Patrol was the service provider for customers spanning 31 countries with business partners in a further 12.

Terracom therefore applied for funding under the SME Instrument, an instrument dedicated to the providing funds to “high-potential innovator[s],” under the Horizon 2020 framework programme. Financial support from the Societal Challenges section, specifically Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies (LEIT) – a programme aimed at “new and breakthrough technologies in areas of research and innovation with a strong industrial dimension - was readily available.

QR-Patrol’s proposal was geared towards engineering QR-Patrol PRO, the evolution of the current QR-Patrol that incorporates Internet-of-Things technologies. Due to that addition, it is expected by QR-PatrolPRO to be the “first application” of its kind “worldwide.” (<http://www.qrpatrolpro-project.com>) The application will implement original functionalities that will serve to replicate the routine procedures followed by security guards. These functionalities are to include: accurate location data outdoor and indoor (even without the aid of GPS coverage), workers’ health monitors with further capabilities of recording and transmitting data on workers’ physical condition.

The implementation will integrate a cost-effective cloud-based platform for delivering the highest level of security, supervision and management for security companies using Push-to-Talk and IoT technologies.

The new system aims to simplify and accelerate the process of monitoring, supervising and communicating with security guards, allowing for much desired synergies for security companies. The innovative system plans to disrupt the current security industry as QR-Patrol PRO is expected to join the industry leaders in the Guard Tour Management Systems field.

Upon being awarded the SME Instrument Phase 2 grant, Terracom was in need of adequate IPR protection so as to best exploit the IP attained in the research and development of its innovative technology. QR-Patrol PRO, therefore, consulted the European IPR Helpdesk in the hope that any

assistance would help to clarify possible IPR-related strategies. The importance of confidentiality mechanisms, both internally (with regard to employees within the company) and externally (with regard to potential investors, partners, etc.) was highlighted to great effect.

Informed of the lack of confidentiality mechanisms in the company, the IP consultants from the European IPR Helpdesk clarified the benefits of signing so called non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) with employees and potential business partners. The European IPR Helpdesk illustrated common ways and strategies pursued by other businesses to protect and secure sensitive confidential know-how.

Guidance in the form of a model NDA template was provided under the assumption that Terracom would tailor the agreement to suit the needs of, and to stay in line with, the company's goals. This document was then reviewed by the European IPR Helpdesk, on which the project manager of QR-Patrol commented:

“It is paramount for the project's successful exploitation to take all the necessary measures that will ensure the protection of the intellectual property. We were overwhelmed to know that we could apply to the European IPR Helpdesk for assistance on this matter. The input and feedback provided was highly appreciated and taken into consideration during the process.”

Terracom is now in the midst of development of QR-Patrol PRO, that – sometime during 2018 – will be presented as a new service to the public. The loss of competitiveness due to a lack of IP protection has now drastically lessened, allowing Terracom to focus more resources on the development of QR-Patrol PRO.

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