

Joint press release

For business editors
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Rhenus and Commerzbank collaborating on smart waste management

- **Fully automated supply chains with integrated financial solutions are objective**
- **Benefits: More efficient supply paths, cost savings, and highest data protection standards**

Rhenus Data Office, a service provider in the field of data and document destruction as well as document and waste management logistics, and Commerzbank AG are working together to closely integrate their physical and financial supply chains. In this respect, they rely on technologies such as the internet of things (IoT), IoT sensors, and distributed ledger technologies (DLT) which are being developed in the framework of enterprise labs at Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics (IML).

Clever recycling product containers meet digital, automated financial services

The intelligent sensor ITC^{PRO} developed at Fraunhofer IML and various systems along the supply chain provide event-based data. These data are stored securely and transparently in a distributed ledger for the participants in the process. If ITC^{PRO} initiates a disposal event because a container is full, the collection of the data protection container is handled by Rhenus Data Office. So-called smart contracts, which are intelligent electronic contracts, form the foundation for this. In these the process parameters are examined and compared. If all the agreed conditions have been met, the financial transaction is automatically completed. In this respect Rhenus sets store by a digital and decentralised cash ledger, thus ensuring greater transparency along the financial flow. In the future the customers of Rhenus will be able to view all the contractual data and the current level of recycling product containers, as well as the status quo of the disposal process, on a platform established by Rhenus and Commerzbank.

“In addition to the fully automated collection thanks to IoT sensor technology, the Rhenus Group now covers the direct debit collection command completely digitally with the aid of the Commerzbank payment solution. We expect that the time-consuming examination of invoices and the monitoring of incoming and outgoing payments will be a thing of the past. We trust in DLT and in Commerzbank as a neutral financial services provider,” adds Dr. Stephan Peters, a Member of the Board of Rhenus Group.

“We intend to digitalise and automate the supply chains of our customers with our DLT-based solutions to make these more efficient, more resilient and more productive. The Smart Waste Management use case with Rhenus is a prime example of how attractive this technological

approach is," says Brigitte Réthier, Divisional Board Member Institutional Clients & Transaction Banking Sales at Commerzbank.

Economically sustainable thanks to secure networking

Thanks to the use of modern technologies, the processes for the Rhenus Group and its customers will be more efficient as employees no longer have to check on site whether waste containers are full, for instance. This saves time and resources, involves lowers costs and is good for the environment. Because unnecessary journeys to half-full containers are now a thing of the past. Traffic volumes are reduced through the specific deployment of vehicles, with fuel costs and CO₂ emissions also lowered accordingly. At the same time technology standards and reference architectures safeguard the secure and effortless data exchange between all the parties involved.

Top address in the field of holistic logistics research on board

Rhenus and Commerzbank are enterprise lab partners of Fraunhofer IML in Dortmund. The scientists at the institute develop innovative electronic and DLT solutions for the logistics sector. "Thanks to the DLT solution as a decentralised system all companies have the same level of information. This fosters trust, in particular where the automation of order settlement and invoicing is concerned. This makes it possible to automate processes from beginning to end and ensure synchronicity between material, information and financial flows," underlines Prof. Dr. Dr. Michael Henke, the head of Fraunhofer IML.

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About Commerzbank

Commerzbank is the leading bank for the German Mittelstand and a strong partner for around 28,000 corporate client groups and around 11 million private and small-business customers in Germany. The Bank's two Business Segments – Private and Small-Business Customers and Corporate Clients – offer a comprehensive portfolio of financial services. Commerzbank transacts approximately 30 per cent of Germany's foreign trade and is present internationally in almost 40 countries in the corporate clients' business. The Bank focusses on the German Mittelstand, large corporates, and institutional clients. As part of its international business, Commerzbank supports clients with German connectivity and companies operating in selected future-oriented industries. In the Private and Small-Business Customers segment, the Bank is at the side of its customers with its brands Commerzbank and comdirect: online and mobile, in the advisory centre, and personally in its branches. Its Polish subsidiary mBank S.A. is an innovative digital bank that serves approximately 5.7 million private and corporate customers, predominantly in Poland, as well as in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In 2021, Commerzbank generated gross revenues of some €8.5 billion with around 46,500 employees.

About Rhenus Group

The Rhenus Group is one of the leading logistics specialists with global business operations and annual turnover amounting to EUR 7 billion. 37,500 employees work at 970 business sites and develop innovative solutions along the complete supply chain. Whether providing transport, warehousing, customs clearance or value-added services, the family-owned business pools its operations in various business units where the needs of customers are the major focus at all times.

About Fraunhofer Enterprise Labs

The Enterprise Labs format emerged at Fraunhofer IML in 2013 as a new way of collaboration between business, research and development. The Labs are the ecosystem of long-term and agile collaboration with business. For this purpose, companies and Fraunhofer IML agree on at least three years of cooperation in agile teams and with flexible research focuses - often in partnership with the associated chairs of TU Dortmund University or the Fraunhofer Institute for Software and Systems Engineering ISST. Coworking spaces, professional workshops, laboratories and experimental facilities are also available for the mixed teams from companies and the Fraunhofer researchers in three large halls as well as in the Enterprise Lab Center at Fraunhofer IML, which was set up especially in 2016. There, prototypes can also be built directly on site and even manufactured in small batches.

Disclaimer and Forward-Looking Statement

This release contains forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are statements that are not historical facts. In this release, these statements concern inter alia the expected future business of Commerzbank, efficiency gains and expected synergies, expected growth prospects and other opportunities for an increase in value of Commerzbank as well as expected future financial results, restructuring costs and other financial developments and information. These forward-looking statements are based on the management's current plans, expectations, estimates and projections. They are subject to a number of assumptions and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause actual results and developments to differ materially from any future results and developments expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Such factors include the conditions in the financial markets in Germany, in Europe, in the USA and other regions from which Commerzbank derives a substantial portion of its revenues and in which Commerzbank holds a substantial portion of its assets, the development of asset prices and market volatility, especially due to the ongoing European debt crisis, potential defaults of borrowers or trading counterparties, the implementation of its strategic initiatives to improve its business model, the reliability of its risk management policies, procedures and methods, risks arising as a result of regulatory change and other risks. Forward-looking statements therefore speak only as of the date they are made. Commerzbank has no obligation to forward-looking statements contained in this release to reflect events or circumstances after the date of this release.