



DecaWave creates Partnership Program to meet micro-location rush

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Fabless semiconductor company DecaWave has announced a Partnership Program with the aim to create an ecosystem that leverages its partners' expertise (hardware vendors, software developers, and systems integrators) around the company's DW1000 UWB geolocation chip.

Launched in 2013, the DW1000 operates at data rates of 110Kbps, 850Kbps and 6.8Mbps, and can locate tagged objects both indoors and outdoors with 10-cm accuracy.

DecaWave justifies the move as a way to delegate the design-in of the chip, first addressing the industrial and automotive markets ready to pay a premium for the chip's performance.

"We are a chip company, we are at the bottom of the value chain and we can't build it all", explained Mickael Viot, Marketing Manager at DecaWave. "The real time location market is exploding", Viot added, commenting that in 2014, over 700 customers were evaluating DecaWave's technology across 52 countries, with over 3,000 leads to respond to.

"We cannot address this global market just on our own, so we are building an ecosystem of qualified partners which will be the link between us and our end-customers", said Viot.

Viot expects the number of partners (5 today) to grow to around 12 or 15 before the end of the year (after reviewing their design capabilities to ensure good design practices with the chip).

"We receive more and more demand in the consumer space, especially for applications around the connected home" admits Viot, "and we already have several design-wins with tier-one companies".

The high-volume consumer market is also on DecaWave's roadmap of course, but being roughly 2.5X more expensive than a Bluetooth chip, the single-sourced 6x6mm QFN DW1000 IC designed at 90nm does not fit yet the bill of smartphone integrators. In this space, the DW1000 could displace Bluetooth beacon applications.

"We would have to ship tens of millions of units a year to be in the Bluetooth price-point, but we are already working on our next generation chip towards that goal, probably using a finer geometry and delivered in a 3x3mm chip scale package" said Viot.

"Then for dual source purposes, we are clearly aware that a technology licensing model is the way to go to reach the very high volumes and the low cost required for a broad adoption in the consumer market."

In the long run, Viot could see the emergence of Bluetooth, IR-UWB combo modules.

First partners companies include Agilion, (Germany), Ciholas (USA), IDOLink (SKorea), Red Point Positioning (USA) and WoxuWireless (China), with others to be announced soon.

“The Partnership Program is a win-win-win. Customers looking for implementing a micro location solution can now envision it with reduced time – resource – investment. Partners investing time and skilled resource efforts in DecaWave technology will work very closely with us to design cutting edge solutions. This program is a foundation to make Decawave IR-UWB technology the de facto standard for industrial micro-location solutions.” said Viot in a statement.

Visit the DecaWave Partnership Program at www.decawave.com/partners