

ESCATEC investment enables it to offer manufacture and test of next generation, high density, micro-scale PCBs

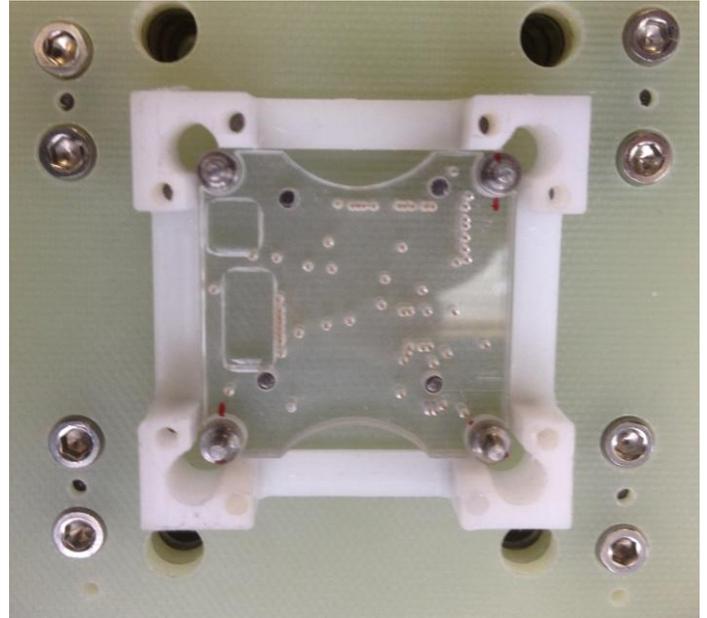
Heerbrugg, Switzerland – 9 March 2015 – ESCATEC, one of Europe's leading providers of contract and manufacturing services, has invested in the next generation of ultra small needles for bed of nails testing of high density, micro-scale PCBs. This will enable the company to provide customers with next generation, high density, micro-scale PCBs that are growing in popularity, especially for wearable electronics and Internet of Things (IoT) applications. Automated bed of nails testing ensures that production costs are kept low for customers and that yields are improved as manual testing with probes is eliminated.

"PCBs are always getting smaller and more densely packed," explained Thomas Eschenmoser, ESCATEC's Section Head Test Engineering. "This creates a challenge for the testing phase of a PCB as the landing pads for test needles become smaller as does the tolerance for the placement of the probe needles. We recently added needles that are only 0.5mm in diameter to our test capabilities as part of our on-going programme of investing in the latest technologies for high density PCB manufacture."

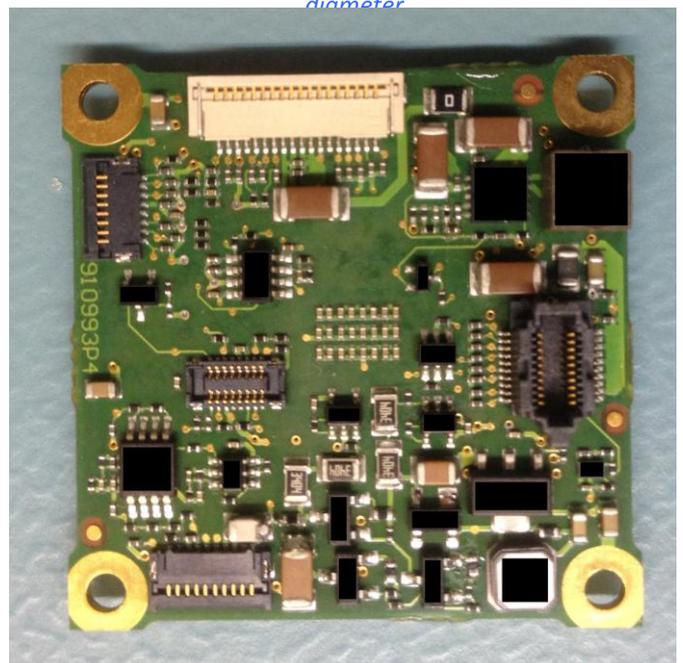
With Microcontact AG products, ESCATEC can go down to 50um pad size and 150um pitch. See: <http://www.microcontact.ch/index.php/en/products?id=124> This links to the recent instalment of ESCATEC's ASM-Siplace SX assembly line that is capable of handling the smallest commercial packages – 01005 components that are smaller than a pin-head, and measure 0.25mm by 0.125mm, which is a growing trend for miniaturised applications.

This is also part of ESCATEC's drive to automate as much of the test procedures as possible. "Every step that involves a human being has a cost element," said Thomas Eschenmoser, "so we are refining all our test procedures to either remove the human element or simplify it. For example, a test can be automated such that it becomes a simple red light for fail or green light for pass making the possibility for human error much less. Similarly, bar codes are used throughout the manufacturing process so that these are just scanned and there is no possibility of an transcription error."

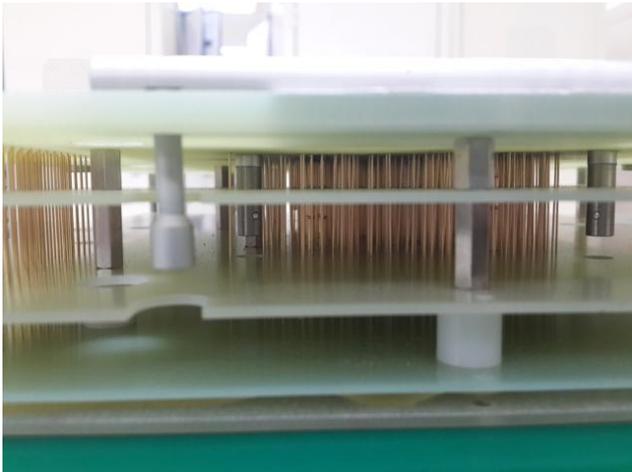
Martin Kingdon, ESCATEC's Business Development Director, added, "By virtually eliminating the human cost element, we can be competitive with contract manufacturers based in low wage countries plus we have the added benefits of Swiss standards of quality. Our central European location means that we are close the customers and their market so that the costs and delays of transport from China are eliminated."



An example of a test bed using microcontacts only 1.27mm in diameter



The matching PCB for the test bed above



A rigid needle adapter



A raster head

More information on rigid needle adapters can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rigid_needle_adapter

ESCATEC

The ESCATEC Group provides fully-integrated electronic and mechatronic design and manufacturing solutions to assist customers in achieving success in their market. Its one-stop solutions and best-in-class service enable companies around the world to operate more profitably, sustainably and efficiently. Founded in 1984, its history is full of innovation, which made it a first choice partner for many European and North American OEMs. The Swiss-owned company perfectly blends Swiss business philosophy and attention to quality, precision and detail with the advantage of low-cost, mass-volume manufacturing capabilities in its Asian factories.

Further information about ESCATEC, one of Europe's leading providers of contract design and manufacturing services: www.escatec.com enquiries@escatec.com

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