eFoodChain

ASSISTING SMEs TO PARTICIPATE IN DIGITAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present you with the first issue of the eFoodChain newsletter, intended to update you on the progress and achievements of this European project. This first issue aims to introduce you to the eFoodChain initiative and present some of its outcomes so far, namely results of the Market Analysis on the adoption of ICT solutions in B2B transactions and the Workshop, which took place in July 2012. Further project developments will be presented in the successive issues of this newsletter, of which we hope you become a frequent reader.

The eFoodChainTeam

News

Don´t miss the opportunity to take part in the **eFoodChain Innovators and Early Adopters Scheme** and be one of the first beneficiaries from the project outcomes...

And check out our **eFoodChain Project** Group in LinkedIn**!**

The eFoodChain Project in a glimpse

The eFoodChain project, funded by the European Commission - DG Enterprise & Industry, is an important step in the promotion of innovation and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), such as digital orders or digital invoices, in the European food supply chain. The project´s goal is **to improve the competitiveness and efficiency of the European food industry by stimulating an innovative and seamless use of information technologies along its value chains**. In particular, SMEs are at the centre of interest of this action, as the objective is to **facilitate the participation of SMEs in global digital value networks** and enable them to become international business partners. The initiative addresses in particular three supply chains: **fresh fruits & vegetables**, **cereals** and **dairy products**, for which it will apply a holistic approach (from farm to fork) and involve various types of agro-food stakeholders.

The consortium behind this project (see page 2) will develop a framework for the digital food supply chain, which will set the principles and rules for interoperability among business processes and data exchange models. This framework will thus allow for **seamless, paperless information and data flows** underpinning B2B transactions along the food supply chain. The project will also demonstrate its feasibility and validate the framework through the set up, monitoring and evaluating of pilot-prototypes to be implemented within the "eFoodChain Innovators and Early Adopters Scheme".

Future sustainability will be ensured by establishing a governance model for the maintenance of the framework and its follow-up, completed by policy recommendations for its mass market adoption. Various awareness raising and dissemination actions will be conducted in the project lifetime to promote among European stakeholders the initiative and the framework developed

The project's ultimate goal is to create an innovative, seamless eBusiness environment that will stimulate and enable the uptake of ICT and eBusiness technologies, notably by SMEs, in this highly SME-intensive sector.

Workshop on the eFoodChain Action: Market Analysis of the food supply chain

One of the objectives of the eFoodChain Project is to identify existing technical and organisational barriers hindering full integration of the agro-food supply chains. The results of this project shall contribute to shape an EU vision on how the transformative power of ICT might affect the competitiveness of the agro-food enterprises. Moreover, the results will help to identify opportunities for EU added value to national and sectoral efforts, and reinforce business relationships between SMEs and other agro-food-related players across the borders.

In this context, the Directorate General Enterprise and Industry of the EC and the eFoodChain Consortium partners organized the **first workshop of the project**, which took place in **Brussels, on the 9th of July 2012**. The event aimed to present the **Market Analysis Repo**rt and served also as an opportunity to validate the obtained results and conclusions with pertinent high-level experts. The workshop gathered in total around 40 participants, representing various sectors and value chain positions within the European agro-food industry.

The outcomes of the conducted Market Analysis allowed the Consortium to propose during the workshop the Challenges, Drivers and some potential Solutions for wider adoption of ICT solutions along the agro-food value chains. In an interactive way the participants were able to provide further inputs and their own judgment on the importance of those outcomes of the market analysis.

eFoodChain Market Analysis

The goal of the Market Analysis was to **assess the use of ICT** and **eBusiness solutions** currently in place along the agro-food supply chains and **provide indications** for next stages of the project (i.e. framework development). The analysis focused especially on the situation among European SMEs of three agro food sectors targeted by the project: fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products and cereals. The agro-food stakeholders were consulted on the present situation and the rate of **adoption of ICT solutions underpinning B2B transactions.** This analysis was conducted for the different supply chains in order to identify existing gaps that could possibly be addressed within the eFoodChain project. To meet this purpose, thousands of European agro-food companies were approached and resulted **in over 350 survey** responses collected and afterwards validated through interviews and research of pertinent data sources. Overall over **40 agro-food companies and 25 IT solution providers** were interviewed in order to complement the Market Analysis.

SKILLS
- lack of skills and knowledgeable **resources** for producers and small companies
- problems of **affordability**

STANDARDS
- **many standards exists** but **few people use** them
- problems to **cross borders**
- problems for **intersectoral** transactions

SOCIAL
- **fears/reticence** at the producer level in many countries
- resistance to **organisation changes**

FINANCE
- high number of SMEs with **low potential of investment** in ICT solutions
- **potential customers still insufficient**

Main barriers to the use of ICT for B2B transactions

The main conclusions of the Market Analysis highlighted the importance of developing ICT from upstream of the value chain and to pay special attention and focus on business messages and traceability. More importantly, it is essential to use international standards and thus comply with interoperability of the processes. Furthermore, also financial cost for SMEs shall not be ignored, being an important criterion for adoption of any solution.

We encourage you to consult the Market Analysis Report for details of the conclusions, expert recommendations and implications that the involved stakeholders might have in shaping the framework development. The complete report is available for download at the project website: www.efoodchain.eu

eFoodChain Innovators and Early Adopters Scheme – enroll now!

The Innovators and Early Adopters scheme will promote the involvement of volunteer stakeholders who will be part of different pilots. This way, they will evaluate the interoperability of different business processes and information flows underpinning B2B transactions, in order to fully exploit the innovative potential of ICT and how the use of the eFoodChain framework can promote the integration of SMEs along the value chain.

Starting at the end of this year and continuing in 2013, the Scheme will take place at the European level.

Interested in becoming one of the Innovators and Early Adopters? Please send send an e-mail to info@efoodchain.eu

eFoodChain on LinkedIn!

Please visit the **eFoodChain Project Group** on LinkedIn and be the first to know all the latest news about the project!

Join today!

Involvement of eFoodChain in UN/CEFACT (PDA Agriculture)

The eFoodChain project was included in the agenda of UN/CEFACT (PDA Agriculture) in the 19th UN/CEFACT Forum that took place between 16th and 20th of April in Geneva. A full day of the PDA Agriculture was devoted to the presentation of the eFoodChain project goals and activities to the members of the PDA and to the identification of possible synergies with ongoing activities of the PDA. Members from France, Netherlands and the European Commission were present. Following this first presentation, the eFoodChain project was present at the 20th UN/CEFACT FORUM that took place between the 17th and 21st of September in Vienna.

During that day the results of the Market Analysis were presented to the members of the PDA Agriculture. Inputs and suggestions for the eFoodChain pilots were discussed. Members from France, Netherlands, China, Japan and the European Commission participated. eFoodChain initiative will continue to be involved in the UN/CEFACT activities (PDA Agriculture) and will participate in the 21st UN/CEFACT Forum. The first specification of the eFoodChain Framework and its Innovators and Early Adopters Scheme (please see above) will be presented in the next Forum.

Consortium

AGRO EDI Europe · inova · DPA Dutch Produce Association · IZBA ZBOŻOWO PASZOWA Członek COCERAL i FEFAC · INESC PORTO LA · SisTrade · A.R.E.F.L.H · FOOD-PROCESSING INITIATIVE