

# e-MENSA

## E-platform Technologies for the European Agri-Food Supply Chain

### Summary description of project objectives

In the last decade severe large-scale food emergencies took place in Europe. Unpredictable accidents, speculative technological management and climatic adversities deeply affected market stability, consumer health and product supply. With the actual structure of European agro-food supply chain, food chain players have realized to be impotent in managing quality and safety of foodstuffs and European consumers have begun to lose confidence in quality and safety systems. The e-MENSA project is based on the understanding that solutions to food chain problems can be found through improved supply chain management infrastructures. Weak points in the European food supply chain are co-operation between players and information transfer from the farm to the consumer and from the consumer to the producer. Purposeful co-ordination of all component processes in the supply chain would assure that the correct standards are applied at the lowest possible cost. The project addresses the possibility of increasing safety and quality standards of the complete food chain, from consumption back to primary production, by the introduction of innovation-based management, which consists of electronic platforms. The central issue for all project activities is the feasibility of employing this management infrastructure to the food system.

The e-MENSA project aims at establishing a multidisciplinary cross-fertilization network among stakeholders active in the agro-food chain in order to develop a shared vision for food supply chain management infrastructures and strategies across Europe. The aim is supporting regional, national and community policies aimed at fostering co-operation across food chain players through consensus-based discussions focused on exchanging of knowledge and experience.

### Structure of project

the project comprises three phases:

- Mapping: these are preliminary researches of technological, economic and organisational elements of European food supply chains highlighting key innovations and barriers to effective management;
- Trans-national discussion platforms involving academic experts and food-chain players aimed at the identification and evaluation of technological to supply chain management in three sectors - Production, Processing and Distribution;
- Dialogue with public, non-government and private sectors regarding the potential for implementation of e-platforms in the food industry with specific remit to encourage the participation of small and micro business.

Each block of work is carried out by a multi-disciplinary cooperation of Partners. The core blocks are WG (Mapping of existing technological systems and management problems), TFG (Discussion of real world experience and needs in relation to ICTs and organizational

structures) and IDP (Integrated Discussion Platform on the feasibility of implementing e-platforms in the food industry and on the potential to redress imbalance in the power structure of the food chain vis small scale producers).

The network established with this Specific Support Action will represent a durable community of players, exploring the potential for such radical approaches to food chain management.

### Results achieved

At the end of the first year of the project life cycle the results already achieved are following described:

- ✓ All preliminary studies have been developed: surveys of technological options available for food supply chain management and evaluations of e-platform potentialities have been elaborated and the elements of success of existing technologies for the food chain the framework for understanding the implementation of e-platform infrastructures have been identified and mapped;
- ✓ The three Technical Focus Groups have been set up and started their work on the basis of preliminary study results. From them, recommendations for the implementation of supply chain e-platforms emerged;
- ✓ The last pan-European discussion group, the Integrated Discussion Platform is in progress;
- ✓ A first leaflet promoting the project at national and European level has been produced and distributed to all project partners in order to disseminate them in their countries and to e-MENSA European Commission officers;
- ✓ A project brochure with the first results is in progress;
- ✓ The organization of project dissemination in two workshop in Italy and Poland is in progress.

### Expected end results

The e-MENSA project expected end results are:

- ✓ Gathering consensus from stakeholders and academic experts on technological feasibility strategies for realising management food supply chain infrastructures in a consensus paper;
- ✓ Drawing out a consensus-based research agenda to be promoted in order to create feasible initiatives for developing research on the issue;
- ✓ Disseminating results to the scientific, business, consumers and to policy-makers community through the publication of results about technological feasibility, a dedicated-half day presentation of results to European Parliament, an easy accessible brochure, a recommendation paper for regional and national representatives.