# e-MENSA
# E-platform Technologies for the european Agri-Food Supply Chain

## *Research Agenda*
## *Executive summary*

The aim of the Specific Support Action e-MENSA, supported by the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Union, is to assess if an innovative food supply chain infrastructure based on Information and Communication Technology (e-platform) is applicable to the food chain and to identify future scientific and technological research needs for e-platforms to be realised in the near future across European agri-food chains.

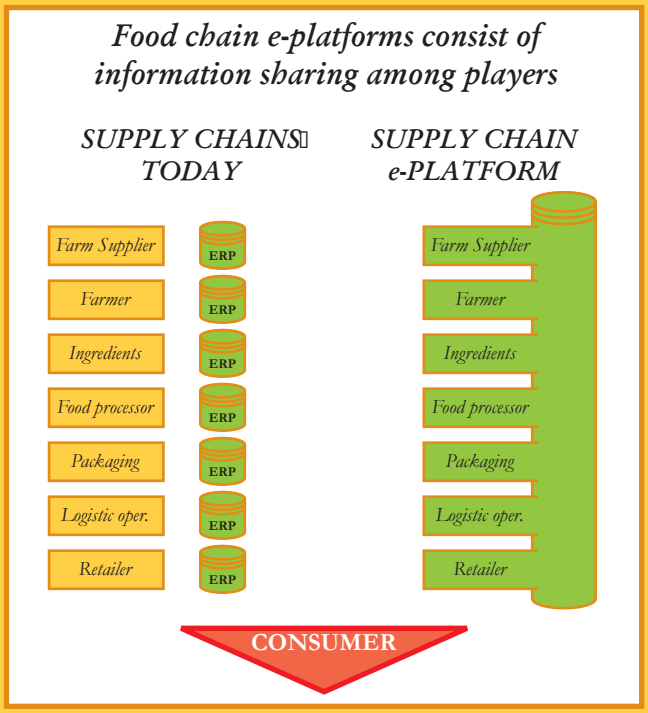
E-Platforms are software infrastructures which allow all members to share some specific information. The benefit of information sharing results in improved food chain management and efficiency and as a consequence reduce diseconomies and transaction costs. However, if the adoption of an e-platform comes with the appropriate managerial approach, or even with business and technology re-engineering where necessary, the potential benefits are much broader, such as granting quality of products, ensuring safety, lowering time-to-market, minimising costs, providing flexibility in order to meet market changes, supporting co-ordination activities among supply chain members and much more.

Fundamental aspects of e-platforms still need to be developed with future scientific and technological research. The research needs can be divided in two main chapters:
a) the first dealing with technologies and new tools in order to make e-platforms become a reality for the food supply chain;
b) the second dealing with methods, new approaches and concepts specifically tailored for the agri-food chain.

Relating to the technologies and new tools chapter, an innovative feature of the e-platforms is the capacity of forecasting and of detailed planning of product flows along the agri-food chain

Extensive **research on the food supply chain** are necessary to link the e-platform with all possible external parameters for improved planning and technological capabilities such as avoiding contamination and development of toxins, fine tuning agrochemical treatments, forecasting shelf-life and demand.

In particular, **to control sustainable development of the food industry**, research studies on sustainable processes, including packaging materials used, the quantity of waste generated in the production process are needed.
To assure integrity of the food chain, research needs to address the food chain flows and the tracing and tracking of liquid food products and of agri-food commodities. To ensure food quality and safety integrity within the current global food market, studies on inter-modality transport which allows food products to maintain their intrinsic properties despite the long distance of some trans-national supply chains are necessary.

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