



The Global Language of Business

Using Traceability to Capture Ireland's Share of Benefits in the Global Seafood Supply Chain

GS1 Ireland collaborates with industry for compliance with EU fish traceability regulations



CHALLENGE: Market and consumer demands are pressurising the food industry to provide more complete and accurate product information and to further enhance food safety measures. For fish and aquaculture products, a number of regulations have been published that require the sharing of product information by players throughout the seafood supply chain.

SOLUTION: Industry stakeholders, including GS1 Ireland, created a multi-phase project called e-LOCATE, enabling best-in-class traceability for fish industry players via GS1 standards and best practices for weighing, labelling and data communication and sharing.

BENEFITS:

- Standardised processes that enable partners to seamlessly share and receive traceability data
- Efficient regulatory compliance via automated recording of traceability data
- Enhanced analysis of production costs and inventory management
- Targeted, improved recall processes for increased food safety
- Improved customer service and relationships with a more reliable traceability system

Meeting EU regulations and consumer demands

Stringent legislation concerning traceability and food safety has been introduced as a result of food recalls and growing consumer demands to know more about their food. The European Commission (EC) 1224/2009 and EC 404/2011 regulations address the capturing and sharing of traceability information in fish and aquaculture products, requiring all lots/batches of fisheries' products to be traceable throughout all stages of production, processing and distribution. This requires that information about the way fish products are handled, packaged, stored, sold and processed along the supply chain—from the fishing vessel to the consumer—must be accurate and authentic.

In 2012 amid adverse economic conditions and pressing strategic objectives, industry stakeholders including Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), the Sea Fisheries Protection Agency (SFPA), GS1 Ireland, and fishing cooperatives and processors, came together to initiate a multi-phase project, enabling best-in-class traceability for the fish sector to comply with these requirements.

Using GS1 standards to build the traceability framework

The SFPA and BIM-led project called e-LOCATE (Lots to Origin, the Control, Assurance and Traceability of EU seafood) was designed to promote the efficient and secure collection, management and sharing of product information through the adoption of global standards and best practices for weighing, labelling and data exchange.



BIM and the SFPA launched this EU-funded project to provide financial assistance to Irish seafood enterprises by supporting traceability implementations of new hardware and software. Key to the project was the industry's transition from paper-based documentation to modern automatic identification and data capture (AIDC) technologies such as barcode scanning and facilitating the storing and sharing of information in a standardised, electronic way.

GS1 Ireland facilitated the collaboration of industry players as well as the appropriate use of global GS1 standards for traceability, to include:

- Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN®) to uniquely identify products such as a type of frozen fish
- Global Location Number (GLN) to identify locations such as a specific fishing vessel, pond or fishing area
- Serial Shipping Container Code (SSCC) to identify logistics units, such as cases of fish products, which are typically encoded in a GS1-128 barcode that carries additional traceability information such as the best-by-date and lot/batch number
- GS1 DataMatrix barcodes to carry traceability information on packed fish boxes

In supporting the deployment, GS1 Ireland conducts traceability assessments using the GS1 Global Traceability Programme to evaluate companies' compliance against the standards, particularly requirements related to EU fish traceability regulations. In addition, the EU Fisheries Control Expert Working Group, consisting of 28 representatives from relevant fish and marine regulatory authorities in the EU and representatives of the European Commission, acknowledged that the use of GS1 standards helps various control authorities to achieve compliance with the regulations.

95% of upstream businesses and 78% of downstream businesses stated that their traceability system allowed them to effectively improve product quality.*



“The use of GS1 standards in compliance with the EU fish traceability regulations have also enabled Sofrimar to improve our risk management and recall system. The ability to link batches of fresh fish at the receival area from multiple suppliers to the finished product, improved the monitoring capabilities. Quantities of product can be effectively ascertained within minutes in an event of a contamination or recall using this integrated traceability system”

Irene Doyle,
Quality Assurance & Compliance
Manager, Sofrimar Ireland

*Source: "Assessing the Value and Role of Seafood Traceability from an Entire Value-Chain Perspective," Global Food Traceability Center, 2015.



Key benefits for fish industry

As a result of the e-LOCATE initiative, Ireland's fish industry is well on its way to implementing a global, best-in-class traceability solution, including benefits such as:

- Standardised approach as their labels and electronic messages are accepted by nearly all customers, enabling a single communication pathway to share and receive traceability data with partners
- Automated reading of the e-LOCATE label to record the necessary traceability data for meeting regulatory requirements compared with manually recording received products
- Enhanced business information systems, allowing players to analyse production costs and inventory management as well as demonstrate faster, more sophisticated traceability and recall systems
- Positioned to meet customers' demands with an improved, faster and more reliable traceability system

In fact, existing global supply chain standards were reviewed and augmented to account for the specific business and trading needs of the fish industry; this was initiated as a direct result of the progressive work being undertaken in Ireland.

Next steps

GS1 Ireland will continue to provide technical support for the deployment of GS1 standards, supporting current and new companies that want to expand traceability capabilities to their facilities. Among the 52 participating companies—4 cooperatives, 12 processors, 29 solution providers and 7 software providers—actual return on investment (ROI) was not measured, although the payback period is estimated to be within two years. Measuring tangible business impact is planned for after the implementation phase.



About GS1

GS1 is actively working with industry to solve supply chain challenges and utilise standards-based solutions to combat counterfeits, remove unsafe products from shelves, empower consumers to know more about the products they buy, and protect brand integrity.

GS1 is a not-for-profit organisation that develops supply chain standards. The GS1 Global Traceability Solution is built upon GS1 standards, the GS1 Global Traceability Assessment, sector-specific guidelines and the expertise of GS1 teams around the world.

Contact

Interested in learning more about this success story? Contact GS1 Ireland at www.gs1ie.org

Interested in learning more about the GS1 Global Traceability Programme? Contact your local GS1 Member Organisation at www.gs1.org/contact or visit www.gs1.org/traceability.

With special thanks to :



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