



D8.1 – Innovation Platform

WP8-Collaboration with other projects

Authors

 ISEKI Food Association
Katherine Flynn kflynn@iseki-food.net Luis Mayor luis.mayor@iseki-foo.net Luminita Ciolacu luminita.ciolacu@iseki-food.net

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1 Executive Summary

This deliverable outlines the development of a sustainable virtual environment, the Innovation Platform, for knowledge transfer, innovation, and cooperation for all actors, stakeholders, and persons interested in innovative food supply chains. The Innovation Platform aims to encourage:

- Generating, sharing, discussing, and using information on food supply chain innovations;
- Publicizing successful innovative food supply initiatives;
- Access to both targeted and general training materials and e-learning about innovative food supply chains;
- Availability of public project documents and reports as well as relevant publications in any form (videos, presentations, infographics); and
- Cooperation and discussion among related European and national projects and associations.

The Innovation Platform will include features to assist users in navigating through information on Intermediate value chains. The Platform will be available in multiple languages, will have a menu bar with multiple tabs and dropdown menus, and will contain multiple links to related sites.

The Innovation Platform will be completely hosted on the server of the ISEKI-Food Association (IFA). Communication on this server is secure and encrypted and there are many user roles with different access rights, from administration to anonymous. The Platform will remain on the IFA server after the end of the FAIRCHAIN project and its sustainability will be addressed by aiming to include its use in future project proposals.

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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation acronym	Description
IFA	ISEKI-Food Association
SFSC	Short food supply chain
UHOH	University of Hohenheim

2 Design of the Platform

The Innovation Platform will be accessible to all community members: That is anyone involved or interested in innovative food chains. The Platform is essentially a website, and from it anyone will be able to access the inventories (see 3.3) and find information on the outcomes of the FAIRCHAIN Case Studies, pilots, and demonstrations, as well as from four other RUR6 and RUR7 H2020 projects dealing with innovative food chains, that is the FAIRCHAIN “sister projects”: CO-FRESH, PLOUTOS, LOWINFOOD and FOODRUS. Publicly available project results: best practices, guidelines, tools, and methodologies will also be available (see 3.4.1). Additionally, the platform will offer the possibility to subscribe to training courses (see 3.5) and public events (see 3.7). Importantly, the Platform is not a replacement of project websites: FAIRCHAIN and each of the sister projects will have its unique portal.

The Innovation Platform will be built from the SMARTCHAIN Innovation Platform. The SMARTCHAIN project (www.smartchain-h2020.eu) ran from September 2018 through August 2021 and had the ambition to further support the development of collaborative short food supply chains (SFSC) and promote a more favourable framework for sustainable, local, healthier, and ethically produced food in Europe. Thus, the SMARTCHAIN Innovation Platform was restricted to SFSC. The new Innovation Platform will extend the domain of applications to intermediate and long value chains and will consider the activities of other RUR6 and RUR7 funded projects.

The new Innovation Platform will be developed and managed in conjunction with the CO-FRESH project, as both projects have written into their Descriptions of Action. Additionally, the three other RUR- selected projects, LOWINFOOD, PLOUTUS, and FOODRUS have agreed to participate in the Innovation Platform by e.g., adding their public deliverables and other publications, contributing to the inventories, and attending regular Platform update meetings where the Platform priorities and direction will be set. These three projects however do not have a written obligation to contribute to nor to manage the Platform. The five projects have begun discussions on the new Innovation Platform and several names have been proposed but a name is not yet fixed. This multi-project collaboration will increase both available information and potential users. As such, the Platform will facilitate:

- 1) integration of FAIRCHAIN, CO-FRESH, and other RUR project communities, with already established SMARTCHAIN users,
- 2) exploitation of SMARTCHAIN results, contributing to SMARTCHAIN's sustainability, and
- 3) knowledge sharing among actors and stakeholders about short, intermediate, and long food value chain solutions.

The Innovation Platform will be hosted on the IFA server and built using the content management framework Drupal 7. Communication is encrypted and there are many user roles, from administration to anonymous, and many modules which increase site functionality.

Small farmers/producers and other actors and stakeholders are the target audience of the Platform, and they will easily find information on how to implement innovative solutions to scale-up to intermediate agri-food value chains and will be able to liaise to seek advice. Larger stakeholders may also find their “inspiration” to better fit consumers expectations, if not to downscale. And consumers may find intermediate agri-food chains in their areas or be motivated to encourage their development.

3 Main features of the Platform

3.1 “Home Page”

Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform): The current Home Page of the Innovation Platform (Figure 1) includes a short summary of the SMARTCHAIN project and explains the aims and objectives of the Platform. The text includes a paragraph indicating that once SMARTCHAIN is over (31/08/21), five recently funded H2020 projects: FAIRCHAIN, CO-FRESH, PLOUTOS, LOWINFOOD and FOODRUS will continue the Platform.

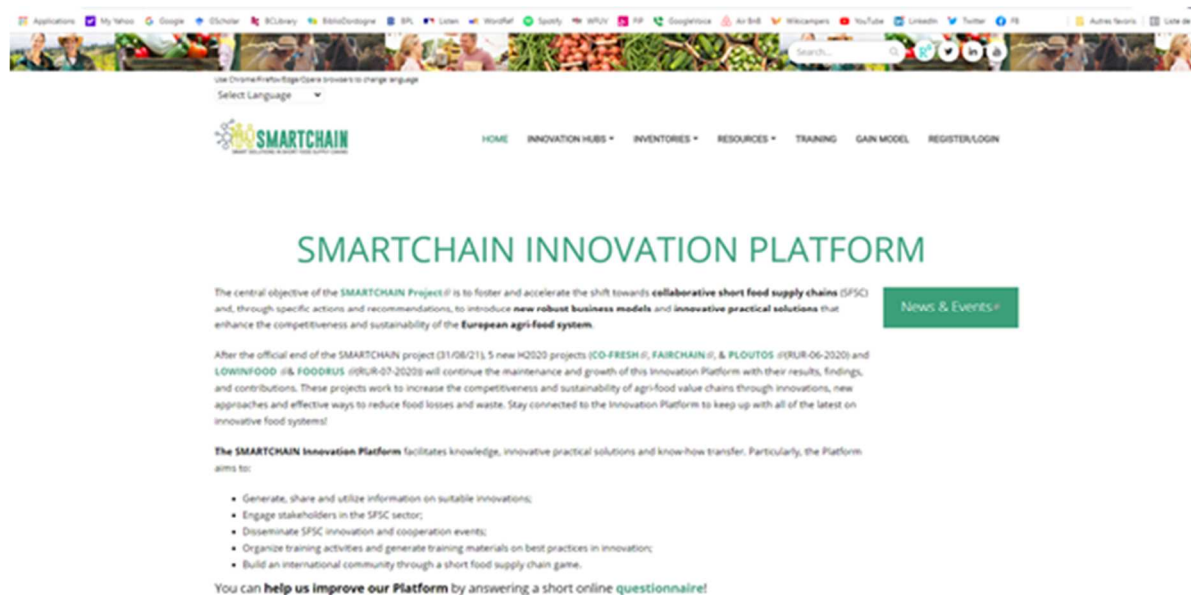


Figure 1: Home (Landing) Page of the Innovation Platform. See the current platform at www.smartchain-platform.eu/

The main visuals and functions of the current Home Page are:

- the top montage of photos showing consumers and producers of fresh foods,
- the SMARTCHAIN logo,
- a menu bar with 7 tabs (Home, Innovation Hubs, Inventories, Resources, Training, GAIN Model and Registration/Login),
- a Google translate button which allows automatic translation into 100+ languages,
- the site name and,
- under the introductory text, 5 unique User Icons for the 5 stakeholder roles (Consumer, Farmer & Cooperative, Industry & Retail, Policy Maker, Technology Provider).

Additionally, there is a large interactive map below the User Icons and then the 9 SMARTCHAIN Innovation Hubs, visible by location. The 18 Case Studies in the 9 partner countries are accessible through each Innovation Hub.

Underneath these main visuals, one finds (Figure 2) a link to sign up for the newsletter including a checkbox for agreement with, and a link to, the Privacy Policy, a link to the Project Website, a contact link which leads to a form where users may pose questions (these are sent to IFA managers of the platform), and copyright information. Finally, the European emblem (flag) is located in the

bottom bar to acknowledge the support received under the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme.

The SMARTCHAIN project has promised a video tutorial “How to Use the SMARTCHAIN Platform”, expected in mid-August 2021. The title of this video will be updated to “How to Use the Innovation Platform” and the video will be prepared by the SMARTCHAIN team such that it can be used after the end of the SMARTCHAIN project. A link to the video will be clearly visible on the Platform Home Page.

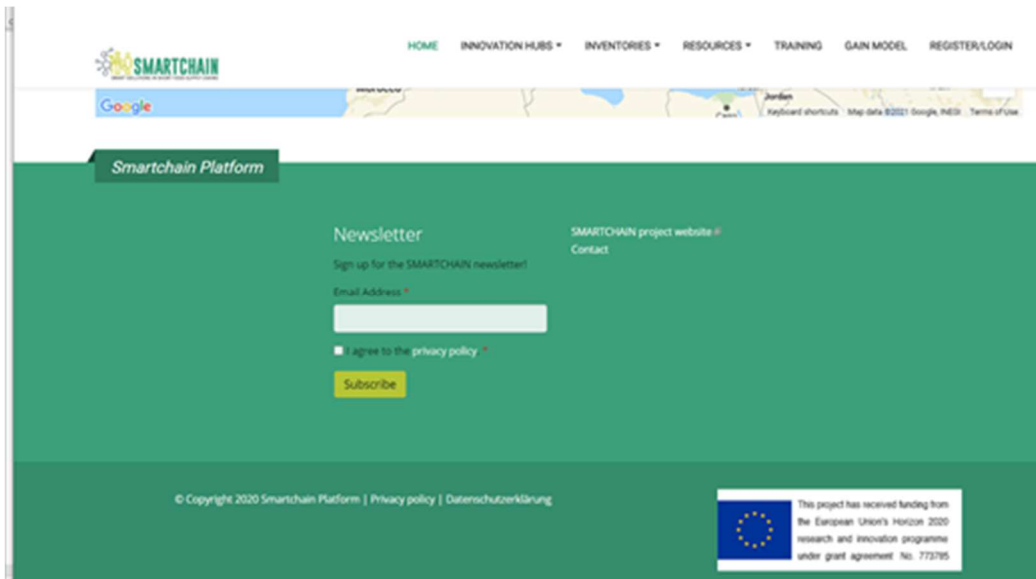


Figure 2 : Home Page (bottom) of the Innovation Platform

New Innovation Platform: When the SMARTCHAIN project is finished, the Innovation Platform home page will be updated to include the logos of the 5 projects committed to continuing the Platform (FAIRCHAIN and CO FRESH who are contracted to do so and PLUTOUS, FOODRUS and LOWINFOOD who have already agreed to participate). The logos will be accompanied by a short text about each project and a link to the individual project websites.

3.2 Innovation hubs

Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform): The innovation hubs tab leads to the 9 Innovation Hubs created during the SMARTCHAIN project: in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, and Switzerland, with links the drop-down menu (Figure 3). The Hubs may also be accessed via the Interactive Map (Figure 4).

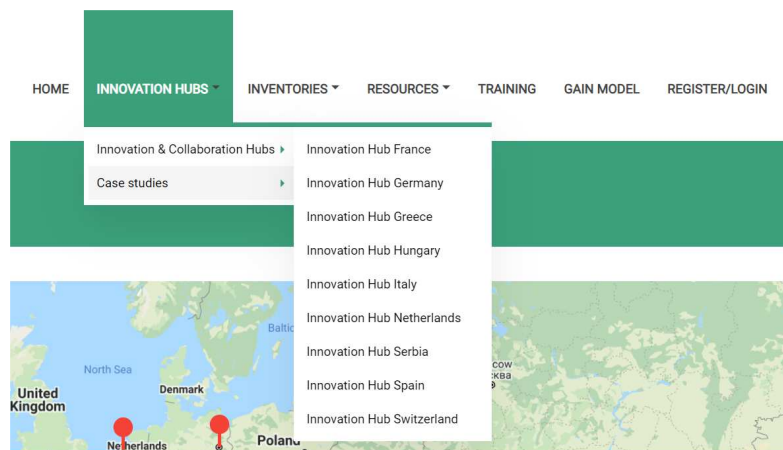


Figure 3 : Innovation Hubs and Case Studies drop-down menu

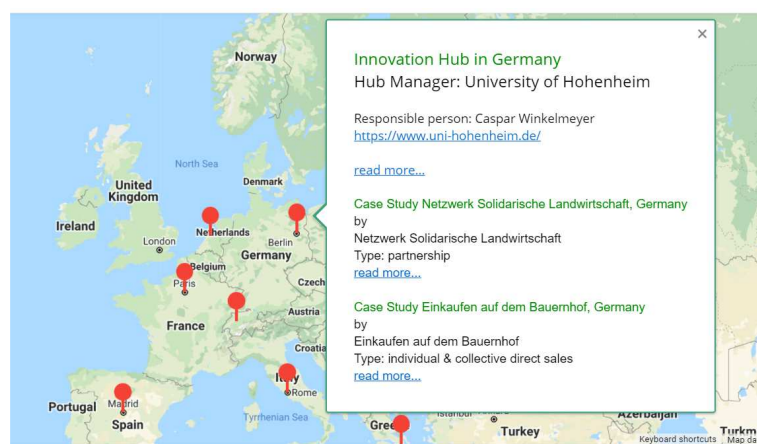


Figure 4 : Innovation Hubs and Case Studies access through the interactive map

The Hubs' aim was to facilitate cooperation and Hub managers updated the Platform with local information. Each Hub links to 2 SFSC case studies where users find information about working SFSC for commonly consumed foods in Europe, e.g., fruits and vegetables, meat, dairy, and bakery products.

The pages on the Innovation Hubs and the Case Studies were not among the most visited pages as reported in a 16-month study of the SMARTCHAIN Platform (Chrysanthopoulou et al., in review). Figure 5 shows that the Innovation Hubs overview page was visited more than 75% less than the most visited page of the Platform, the Innovation Inventory, 401 vs 1559 visits, respectively. Only one Case Study and one Hub were among the top 10 most visited pages.

New Innovation Platform: It is anticipated that the Innovation Hubs tab of the menu bar will be removed, and the content placed in a new location: a subtab of Resources entitled "SMARTCHAIN Project" (see 3.4). The new Innovation Platform will not have a section comparable to the Innovation Hubs.



Figure 5 : Number of views of pages on the Innovation Platform, Oct 2019 – Jan 2021 (from Chrysanthopoulou et al., in review)

3.3 Inventories

This section houses two databases or “inventories” of innovative food supply chain information. The Innovation Inventory of tools or items and the Initiative Inventory of locales or businesses.

3.3.1 “Innovation Inventory”

3.3.1.1 Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform)

The Innovation Inventory currently displays 147 food supply chain innovations of all kinds: technical, social, marketing, digital, environmental, et al. with a landing page (Figure 6) that shows a photo or graphic for each innovation, a short description, an indication of the GAIN model level (see section 3.6), and a link for more information. As seen at the top of the landing page, innovations may be searched by keyword or by GAIN level, and (registered) users may add innovations to the inventory.

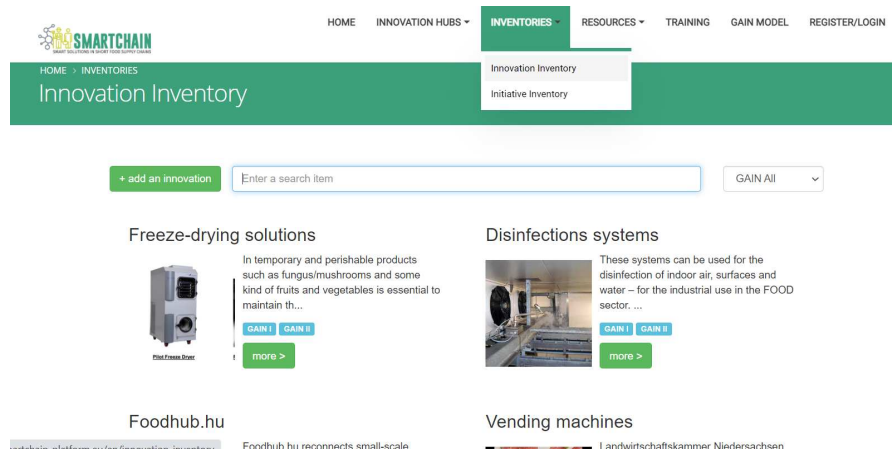


Figure 6 : Innovation Inventory landing page

Following “more” for an innovation reveals (Figure 7): a full summary, type of innovation, end users, country, external link, and email contact.

The screenshot shows the 'Freeze-drying solutions for food products' page. It includes a navigation bar with 'HOME', 'INNOVATION HUBS', 'INVENTORIES', 'RESOURCES', 'TRAINING', 'GAIN MODEL', and 'RI'. A search bar is present with a '< back' button and a 'GAIN All' dropdown. The main content area features a 'Summary' section with detailed text about the freeze-drying process, its benefits for food preservation, and its application in various business sizes. Below the summary is a table with three columns: 'Type', 'End users', and 'Countries'. The 'Type' is 'Technological innovation', 'End users' are 'Farmers' and 'Food producers', and 'Countries' is 'Worldwide'. There are also sections for 'External links' (with URLs like https://www.telstar.com/ and https://www.spscientific.com/freeze-drying-lyophilization-basics/) and 'Support' (with contact information for Raquel Rodriguez).

Figure 7 : Information page for a typical innovation

Clicking “Add an Innovation” opens a short online form (Figure 8) which is completed by the user and reviewed by the Platform managers before becoming available in the Inventory.

The screenshot shows the 'Add Innovation' form. On the left, a partial view of the 'Innovation Inventory' page is visible, with a red arrow pointing to the 'Add Innovation' button. The main form is titled 'SMARTCHAIN INNOVATION DESCRIPTION' and contains several sections: a disclaimer, 'Innovation description questions' with 'Yes' and 'No' buttons, a text input field for the title, a 'Picture of innovation' section with an 'Upload file' button and a note 'Please upload at most one file', and an 'Upload file' button at the bottom.

Figure 8: Online form for users to add an innovation to the Inventory

3.3.1.2 New Innovation Platform

Searching the inventory by country, end user, and innovation type as well as rating innovations with 1 to 5 stars will be possible before the end of the SMARTCHAIN project on 31 August 2021. Discussed for SMARTCHAIN but not implemented was a comment space for each innovation where, as in Amazon or YouTube, users would be able not only to give 1 to 5 stars but also to write a public comment, pose a question, or comment on the comments of others. Such a comment space, along with an overall intention to grow the Innovation Inventory, is planned for the updated Platform.

3.3.2 “Initiative Inventory”

3.3.2.1 Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform)

The “Initiative Inventory” shows 50 successful Short Food Supply Chain initiatives throughout Europe. These range from local agrotourism or farm visits to European and worldwide campaigns, they may be targeted towards many or specific stakeholders, from consumers to technology providers.

The initiatives can be searched by keyword, region, stakeholder type and/or initiative category (Figure 9) or one can browse the inventory. Registered Platform users can add new initiatives through an online form embedded into the Drupal backend. This form is reviewed by Platform managers and the initiative added to the Inventory.

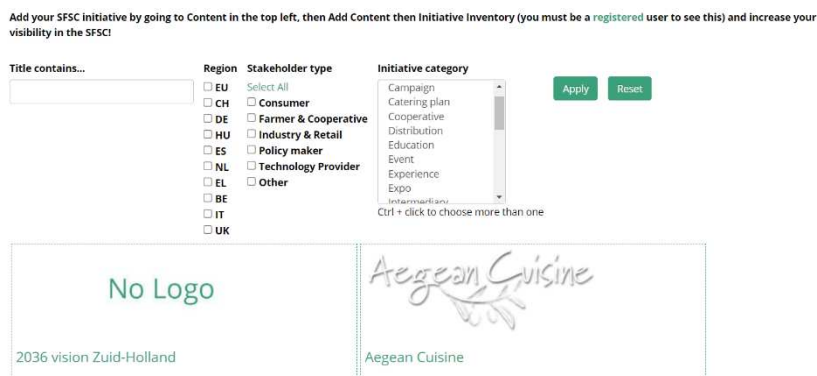


Figure 9: Initiative Inventory landing page shows the search tool

Clicking on a specific initiative (Figure 10) shows its location (region), involved stakeholders, initiative category, short description, extract (relevant information from the description) and, if applicable, web link.



Region:

ES

Stakeholder type:

Farmer & Cooperative

Initiative category:

Distribution

Description:

Bizilur is a distribution company. They supply natural products, organic foods and phytotherapy products. The company was created in 2002 among workers with previous experience in the sector.

Extract from text:

There are very interesting initiatives, for example, Bizilur, of ecological markets that facilitate short chains.

Website:

<http://www.bizilur.com/>

Figure 10 : Information page for a typical initiative

3.3.2.2 New Innovation Platform:

Although the Initiative Inventory has not had as many visits as the Innovation Inventory, it is among the more visited pages according to Google Analytics (Figure 5) and was noted by SMARTCHAIN partners as content to improve for a growing Platform. At the SMARTCHAIN Final Conference in July 2021, 20 partners ranked the relative importance of 5 Platform contents and the Initiative Inventory had an average rank of 3.3 (Figure 11), just behind the Initiative Inventory at 5 and the E-learning courses at 3.6. Like the Innovation Inventory, the growth and improvement of the Initiative Inventory is a primary goal of the new version of the Innovation Platform.

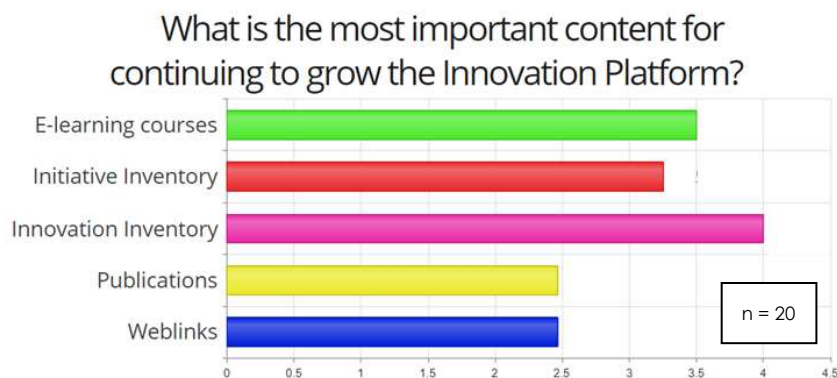


Figure 11 : Average rank of the sections on the Innovation Platform for content improvement

3.4 Resources

This section currently houses two databases of information from both within and outside of the SMARTCHAIN project, Publications and Weblinks. Later, a third tab will be created in this section, called 'SMARTCHAIN Project', and it will contain information related to the SMARTCHAIN project but not to the new Innovation Platform for example: the Innovation Hubs and the Gain model.

3.4.1 “Publications”

3.4.1.1 Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform)

The Publications database contains all public deliverables from the SMARTCHAIN project. It also contains peer-reviewed articles of interest that came to the attention of project partners. The database can be browsed, or results can be filtered by the following fields:

- From SMARTCHAIN? (select “Yes, No, Any”),
- Year,
- Stakeholder type (select “Consumer, Farmer & Cooperative, Industry & Retail, Policy maker, Technology Provider, Other”),
- Author name, and
- Search Terms.

The filters can also be used in combination (Figure 12).

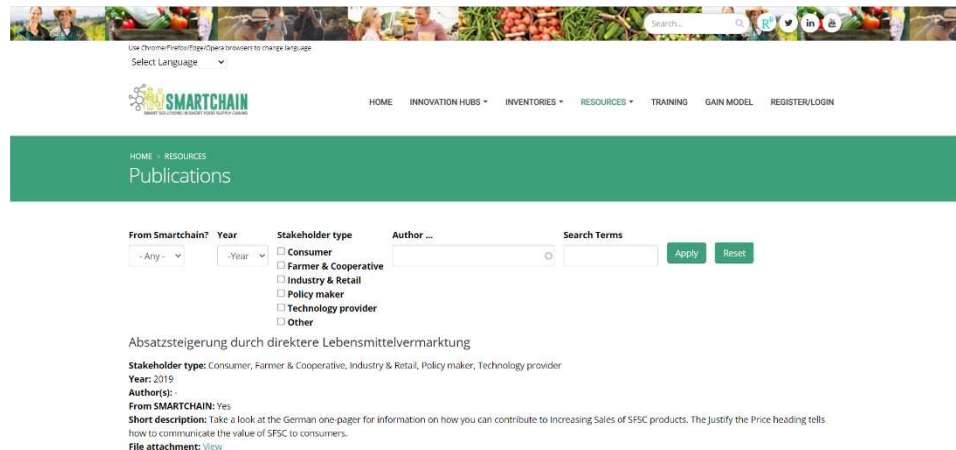


Figure 12 : Landing page for the Publications subtab

The database is unique in that it contains not only project deliverables and peer-reviewed articles but also publications related to SFSC in many formats including videos, presentations from within and outside of the SMARTCHAIN project, and infographics (Figure 13).

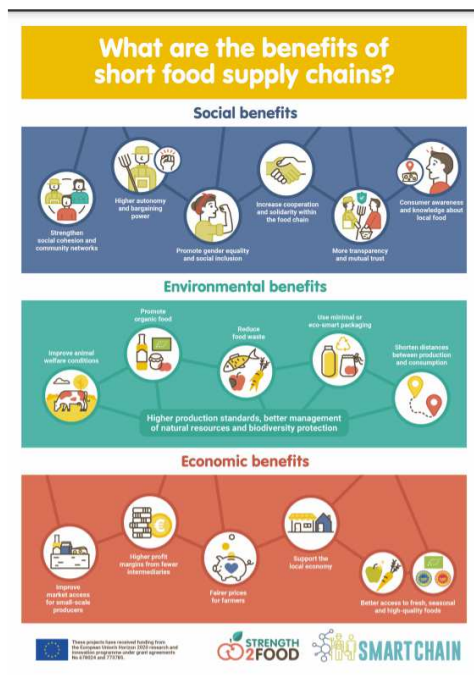


Figure 13 : A SMARTCHAIN infographic available in the Publications database of the Innovation Platform

The Publications database is not among the most visited pages of the Innovation Platform (Figure 5), perhaps, at least in part, because it was not a part of the original Platform design but was instead added at the Platform revision in May 2020. Thus the 595 visits occurred in 8 months while the most visited page, the Innovation Inventory, had 1595 visits in 16 months. Additionally, this page was considered one of the least important to improve by the SMARTCHAIN partners (Figure 11), with an average rank of 2.4 out of 5.

3.4.1.2 New Innovation Platform

The section “Publications” is nonetheless valued and is planned to remain in the same format and to be updated with new publications, including project deliverables from FAIRCHAIN, CO-FRESH, and the other RUR6/7 projects, and articles, videos, infographics, et al. of interest about innovative food value chains. The current search filter will be updated, allowing users to easily find the publications and other materials of FAIRCHAIN, its 4 sister projects and also external sources.

3.4.2 “Weblinks”

3.4.2.1 Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform)

The Weblinks database contains stakeholders of Short Food Supply Chains. For each, the following information is provided: name, logo, region, stakeholder type, website (URL), and a short description. The database can be browsed, or the search can be filtered by the field ‘stakeholder type’ by selecting one of the available options: ‘Consumer, Farmer & Cooperative, Industry & Retail, Policy maker, Technology Provider, Other’ (Figure 14).

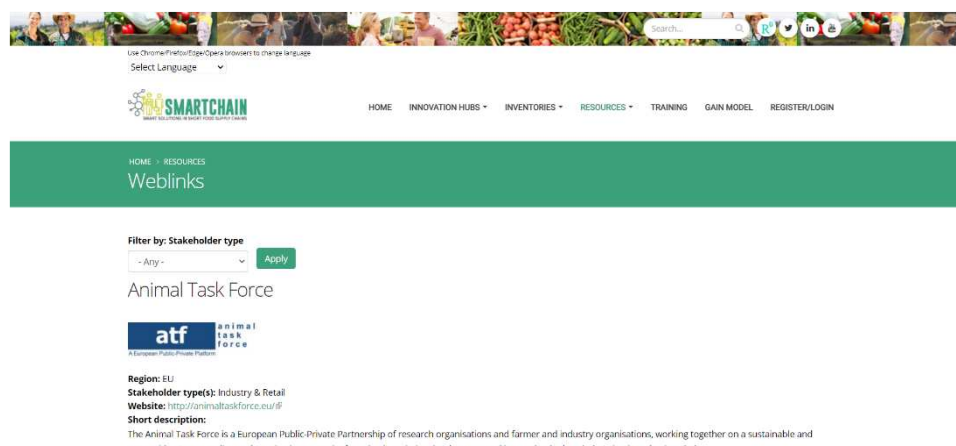


Figure 14 : Landing page for the Weblinks subtab

3.4.2.2 New Innovation Platform

Once the SMARTCHAIN project is finished, the name of the Weblinks subtab will be changed to Networking. The page will be updated to include stakeholders, related projects, relevant associations, and partner organizations of the FAIRCHAIN project with information based on the growing List of Organizations started in Deliverable 7.1 and the database of relevant organizations prepared by CONFAGRICOLTURA. Additionally, the 4 sister projects will also contribute to the growth of this database with their partners, contacts, and networks.

3.5 Training

3.5.1.1 Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform)

The Training tab of the SMARTCHAIN Platform leads to the ISEKI-Food Association's Moodle learning site (Figure 15). Here are training materials from the SMARTCHAIN Project:

- Outcomes of "Innovation and solution-based multi-actor workshops";

- A 5-week, e-learning course on "Best Practices in Short Food Supply Chain Innovations", and
- A video tutorial on use of the platform (available in mid Aug 2021).



Figure 15 : Training section of the platform

Outcomes of the workshops are presentations on SMARTCHAIN activities in the local language and relevant for local activities for each of the 9 Hubs.

The e-learning course consists of 5 sessions, each with approximately 1 hour of activities which are a mix of pre-recorded video presentations, weblinks, readings and infographics and which aim to show learners SFSC innovations now in use, how to grow an individual SFSC initiative and to participate in communities of SFSC stakeholders. The course was moderated twice during the SMARTCHAIN project, in May/June 2021 and currently, ending 22/08/21. For the first round, there were 224 registrants from 58 countries and 21 learners successfully completed the course and earned a SMARTCHAIN certificate. The video tutorial on how to use the SMARTCHAIN Platform is under development and will be available in August 2021.

3.5.1.2 New Innovation Platform

At the July 2021 SMARTCHAIN Final Project Meeting, e-learning was identified as the 2nd most important content to grow for the success of the Innovation Platform (Figure 11). At earlier SMARTCHAIN project meetings, 51% said they were likely or extremely likely to take an e-learning course (2019) and 72% said they would take the Best Practices course (2020).

On the IFA Moodle learning site, the SMARTCHAIN courses have already been merged into a section entitled, Innovative Food Value Chains, the FAIRCHAIN logo added and the skeleton of the first FAIRCHAIN e-learning course, "Introduction to Intermediate Food Value Chains" created. The contributions of the sister projects to the e-learning courses has not yet been defined.

3.6 GAIN model

3.6.1.1 Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform)

The GAIN model section of the Platform presents 4 levels of engagement for SFSC actors. The model aims to increase the competitiveness of short chains with practical solutions to accelerate a sustainable food transition through facilitating collaboration among short food supply chain actors (Figure 16). The model relies on LinkedIn networking and is linked to the LinkedIn group Short Food Chain EU Community, <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8948135/>.

3.6.1.2 New Innovation Platform

The Gain model will be moved to the 'SMARTCHAIN Project' tab that will be created in the Resources section (see 3.4) as it is not expected to be a part of the FAIRCHAIN project.

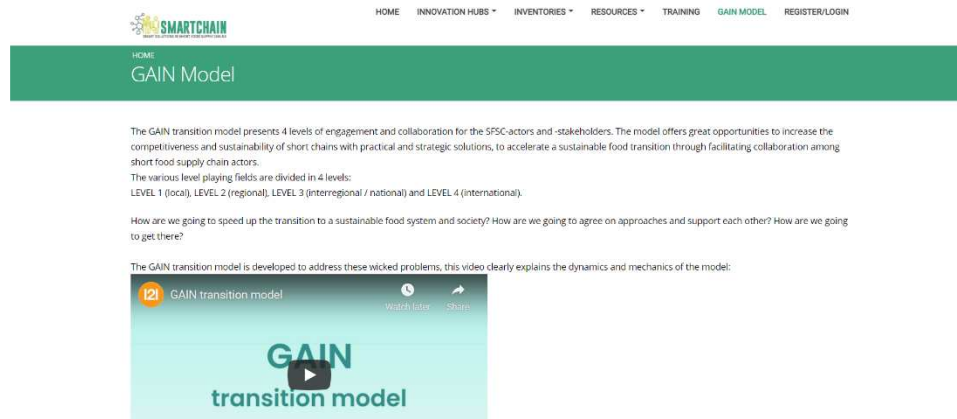


Figure 16 : The gain model section

3.7 News and events

3.7.1 Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform)

The “news & events” section of the platform is reached through a green rectangle on the right of the home page (Figure 17). When clicking there, a new window opens showing news and events (Figure 18). It is not obvious to the user, but a careful look at the site shows that the news and events is located not on the Platform, but on the project website. Only the first part of the text for each news/event is shown, allowing easy scrolling of titles, and clicking on the “read more” option opens the full story.

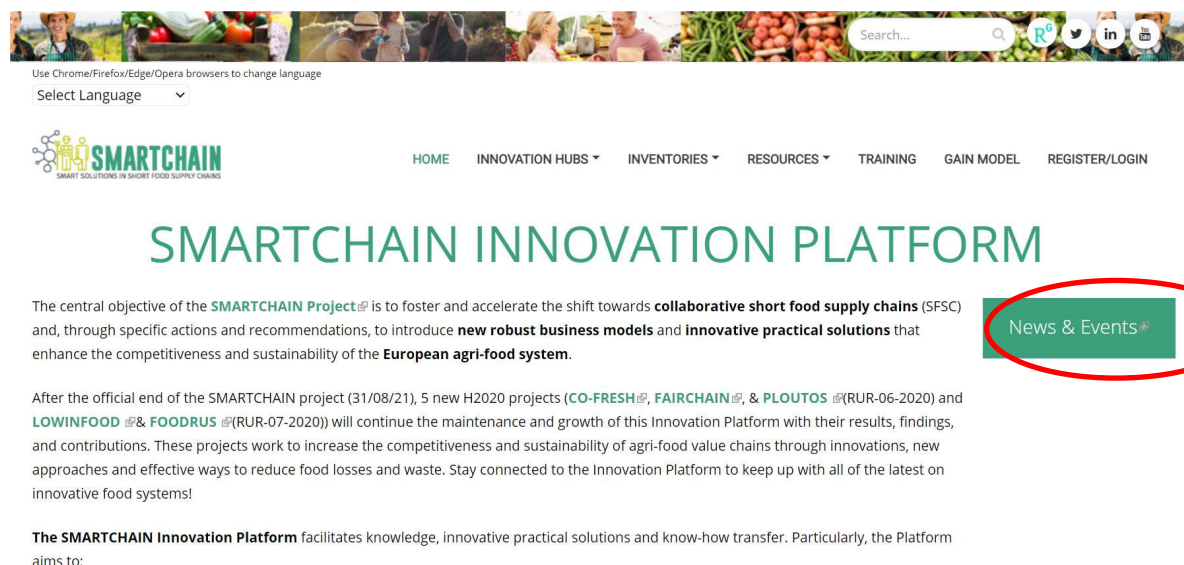


Figure 17 : News & Events button at the home page



NEWS & EVENTS

Pre-Summit of the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 (26th – 28th July, 2021)

News • By Javier Casado • July 16, 2021

The Pre-Summit of the UN Food Systems Summit will set the stage for the culminating global event in September by bringing together diverse actors from around the world to leverage the power of food systems to deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hosted by the Government of Italy, the Pre-Summit will take...

[Read more](#) ▶

Type and hit enter ...

Latest News

- Pre-Summit of the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 (26th – 28th July, 2021)
July 16, 2021
- EFFoST Seminar – Transition towards sustainable farming (30th July, 2021)

Figure 18 : News & Events section of the project Website.

3.7.2 New Innovation Platform

The News & Events link on the Platform will be deleted, and users will instead be directed to the project websites of FAIRCHAIN, CO FRESH, and the three sister projects for News & Events.

3.8 Register/Login

3.8.1 Current situation (SMARTCHAIN platform)

Users can register/login to the Innovation Platform through the last tab of the home page menu (Figure 19).

Figure 19 : Registration/login section



In this section it is possible to create a new account, to login and/or to request a new password.

New registrants to the Innovation Platform complete a short online form which requires only a username and password, a first and surname, and identification as a project partner or not. Project partners therefore may have different rights than other registrants e.g., which pages are visible and/or editable. All submitted Registration Forms are checked by Platform managers to ensure that only real people register and that proper Platform rights are provided. There will be no rejection of any real person registrant.

Certain areas of the Platform are restricted to registered users. This can be modified if desires change during the project lifetime.

3.8.2 New Innovation Platform

The Register/Login link on the Platform will be maintained.

4 FAIR FAIRCHAIN Data Management policy

No datasets were produced for this deliverable. The current SMARTCHAIN Platform and all data available on it may be accessed here, www.smartchain-platform.eu/. The only data anticipated from this deliverable are data on the metrics of use of the Platform which will be available later.

5 Conclusion

The Innovation Platform is already functional and managed by the SMARTCHAIN project with an easily visible statement on the homepage that management will shift to FAIRCHAIN and CO-FRESH, and contributions will come also from LOWINFOOD, PLOUTUS, and FOODRUS starting 01/09/2021. The Platform will continue to be updated throughout the life of the Project by FAIRCHAIN (IFA) and CO-FRESH (UHOH) and will be an available and valuable resource for all community members.

The Platform will facilitate integration of active and recently finished projects, exploitation of results and knowledge sharing among sister projects and their respective communities. Changes and improvements to the Platform will be based on previous feedback from partners in the SMARTCHAIN project and feedback to be collected from partners in the 5 sister projects.

Platform maintenance will continue after the end of the project by IFA and the platform will remain available to be used by partners and others.

6 Bibliography

Chrysanthopoulou F., Lameris M., Greil G., Vudragovic D., Flynn K., 2021, An online innovation platform to promote collaboration and sustainability in short food supply chains, In Review at International Journal of Food Studies