



**E-learning course on
"best practices on innovation" (i)**

Work Package No. 6

ISEKI-Food Association



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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the activities and materials prepared for the e-learning course on "Best Practices in Short Food Supply Chain Innovations". The objectives, course structure, and main outcomes are also described. The e-course is on the ISEKI-Food Association's Moodle platform.

The course was designed for Short Food Supply Chain (SFSC) entrepreneurs and stakeholders in all SFSC-related fields. It is structured in five sections called "Weeks". Each week is dedicated to a different level of the GAIN model (see D6.8 and D6.9) with selected innovations as examples and as the basis for further learning materials. The example innovations come from the SMARTCHAIN Platform Innovation Inventory and were selected through a vote of WP leaders. In the course, the entrepreneurs present their innovations via pre-recorded videos and explain how the ideas arose or how they found the solutions presented. Related materials, such as website visits, scientific or lay articles, presentations, and/or short videos are included as learning materials for each selected topic. These materials were decided upon by the innovation entrepreneurs and/or the course organizers. Each week has an average contact time of 70 min. Several quick assessments are placed throughout each week of the course for self-evaluation. At the end of the course there is a final quiz with 20 random questions, covering all studied topics. A SMARTCHAIN certificate is available for all participants that successfully complete all course activities.

The first edition of the course was publicized on the SMARTCHAIN project's and ISEKI's social media and through their newsletters achieving a global visibility. A total of 244 registrations were received from 58 countries. A second edition of the course began in mid-July with 25 registrations.

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1. E-course objectives

The training course is designed for Short Food Supply Chain (SFSC) entrepreneurs and stakeholders in all SFSC-related fields (farmer, producer, regulator, marketer, distributor, financier, consumer organisation, etc.). The course is however available to anyone participating in or interested in SFSC anywhere in the world and at any educational level.

There are three main goals of the course:

- to provide a wide range of educational materials and knowledge so participants can better understand SFSC diversity and dynamics, at different interventional levels.
- to show innovative solutions found, either technological or socio-economic, by researchers and by entrepreneurs to improve SFSC systems and businesses.
- to enlarge SFSC networking, where innovators can become part of a larger community of SFSC entrepreneurs by using varied online tools and resources.

With this course we expect that farmers and producers will benefit by learning from others, and perhaps adapting to their own business what others have successfully developed. Policy makers and regulators may learn about programs and initiatives that benefit all local participants of the food chain, from producers to consumers, boosting business at the local level and promoting cooperative work. Consumers may understand the diversity of SFSC and decide the level of engagement they may have in their own community.

2. E-course structure

The e-course is structured in five sections called “Weeks”. The best innovations from the SMARTCHAIN Innovation Inventory, which had previously been selected by WP leaders and linked with their appropriate level of the GAIN transition model by the GAIN team, are included in each section. In addition to the innovation entrepreneurs, several other project partners contributed to the course with video presentations about the work developed within the project tasks and their research expertise.

Each week has an introductory presentation, by one of the e-course organisers, about the topics and learning materials to come. After most of the topics, there is a “check your understanding” self-assessment quiz, as training for the final quiz. At the end of each week, suggested activities and further readings are listed as an opportunity to widen knowledge. Each week has an average learning time of around 70 minutes.



Figure 1: E-course heading presentation

The first edition of the e-learning course started on Monday 24 May 2021 at 00:00 CEST and was active for the participants until 4 July 2021 at 23:59 CEST. Each “Week” of the course became available to participants every Monday at 00:00 CEST and stayed active until the end of the course. Participants could complete the tasks at their own pace and at the latest by 4 July 2021.

The following chapters of this report present the sections of the e-learning platform visible to students.

2.1 E-course guidelines and interactive environment

This is an introductory chapter, which defines the e-course guidelines and promotes communication between organizers and participants. It has the following topics:

- Course guide
- Announcements

- Discussion forum
- Quick self-assessment

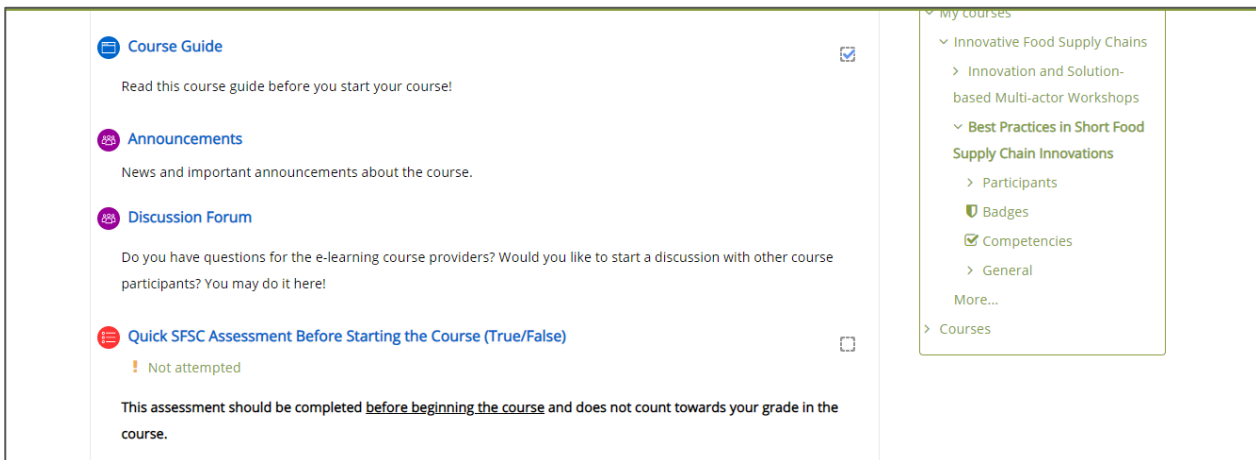


Figure 2: Introductory chapter of the e-course

Before beginning the course, participants view the course instructions and learn how to progress along the weeks. An announcements section was regularly updated. In the discussion forum, participants were encouraged to participate by asking questions, launching debate topics and connecting between peers. Finally, a quick self-assessment of 10 T/F questions was required in order to evaluate the participants starting level of understanding about SFSC.

2.2 Week 1: Short Food Supply Chains and Innovation

In the first week, the overall topics were introduced: the SMARTCHAIN project, the Short Food Supply Chains concept, and the GAIN Transition model. Studies on consumer’s perceptions and smart specialisation strategies were also presented.

The week 1 programme:

- 1.1 Welcome to the e-course
- 1.2 The SMARTCHAIN Project
- 1.3 Consumers and Short Food Supply Chains
- 1.4 Innovation and Design of Smart Specializations
- 1.5 The GAIN Transition Model
- 1.6 Gamification concepts

2.3 Week 2: Innovations for Local SFSC

The second week of the course addressed innovations at the local SFSC level (level 1 of the GAIN model). The selected examples were two local innovations: the fruit press and vending machines. Furthermore, an introduction to social innovation from the local innovation hub in Greece was made, together with the requirement to become acquainted with the innovation inventory and the initiative inventory of the SMARTCHAIN Platform.

The week 2 programme:

- 2.1 Introduction to week 2
- 2.2 Short Food Supply Chain Inventories
- 2.3 Innovation at the Local Level: The Fruit Press
- 2.4 Innovation at the Local Level: Vending Machines
- 2.5 Introduction to Social Innovation: The Example of the Greek Hub
 - 2.5.1 Basics of Social Innovation

2.4 Week 3: Innovations for Regional SFSC

The third week of the course was about innovations at the regional level of the SFSC (level 2 of the GAIN model). These included a case of sustainable online shopping and the community-supported agriculture concept. Several examples were given in addition to the cases on the SMARTCHAIN Innovation Inventory. Furthermore, the local innovation hub in Italy presented their two case studies of short food supply chains.

The week 3 programme:

- 3.1 Welcome to week 3
- 3.2 Introduction to innovative solutions of regional SFSCs
- 3.3 Innovation at Regional Level: Sustainable online shopping
- 3.4 Innovation at Regional Level: Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA)

2.5 Week 4: Innovations for (Inter)national SFSC

The fourth week of the course addressed innovations at the national and international levels - that is Level 3 or 4 of the GAIN model. It included lessons about trust and social innovation, connecting to the community, and also about digitization.

The week 4 programme:

- 4.1 Welcome to week 4
- 4.2 Introduction to (Inter)national SFSC Collaborations
- 4.3 Innovative Certification System for SFSC
- 4.4 Innovative Blockchain Solution for SFSC

2.6 Week 5: Further Steps for SFSC Community Building

The fifth week of the course was the conclusion, it reviewed what had been covered in previous weeks with a focus on collaborative strategies to build SFSC communities and the needs of consumers and how to address them.

The week 5 programme:

- 5.1 Welcome to week 5
- 5.2 Best Practices on Innovations Implementation in SFSC
- 5.3 Smart Specialization and SMARTCHAIN Project
- 5.4 Consumers Insights When Buying SFSC
- 5.5 SFSC LinkedIn Community interactions
- 5.6 Gain Model Level IV Consortia
- 5.7 Keep Learning with Another MOOC

A quick assessment quiz about SFSC, same as the one at the beginning of the course, was asked after all activities to evaluate the participants level of improvement regarding SFSC knowledge.

At the end of the course, there was a final quiz with 20 random questions chosen from the Check Your Understanding quizzes throughout the course. This quiz was graded and a grade of 80% or above was required for success. Participants who successfully completed the quiz and all other course activities received a SMARTCHAIN certificate.

3. E-course publicity and registration

The e-course was publicized at the SMARTCHAIN project and ISEKI's social media networks – LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and a dedicated email was sent to the ISEKI contact list (8482 subscribers). The banner and the textual info had a direct link to the registration page.

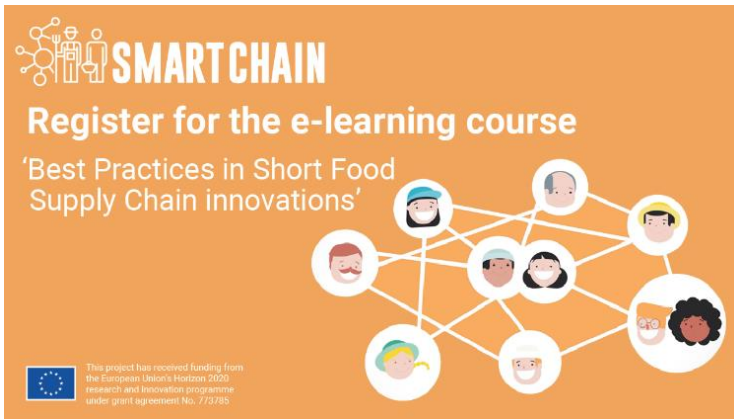


Figure 3: Publicized banner

E-course pre-registration was available at the SMARTCHAIN platform:

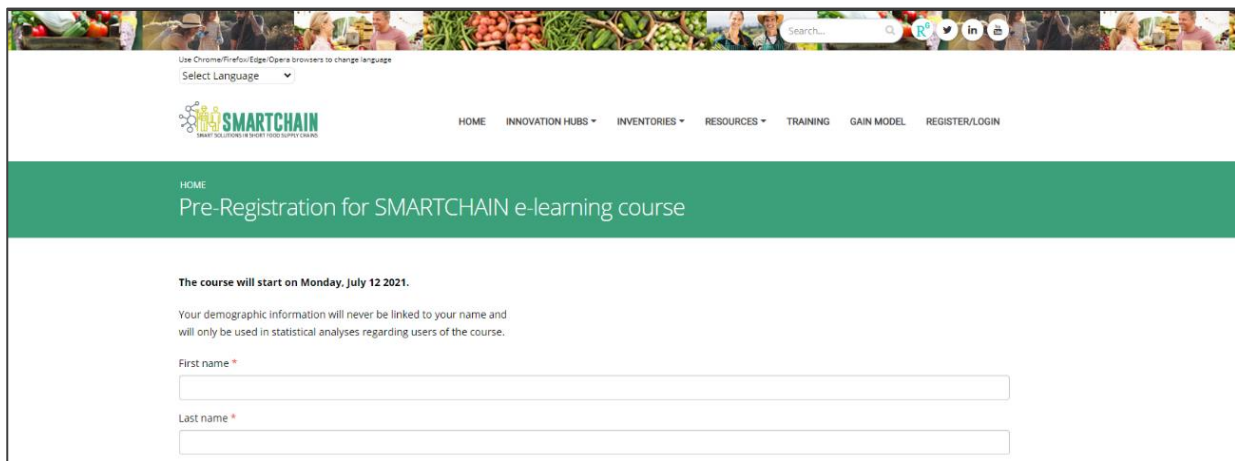


Figure 4: Registration page at the SMARTCHAIN platform

For the first edition a total of 244 registrations were received, from 58 countries. Sixty-seven percent of the registrants were female and more than 95% were between 21 and 60 years old.

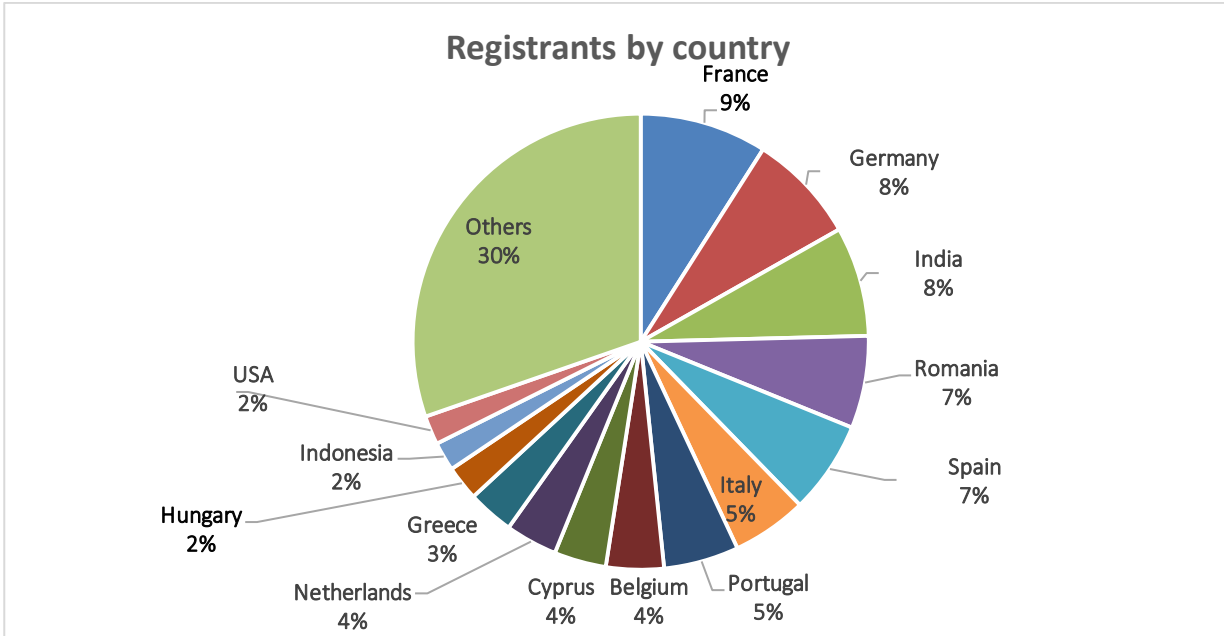


Figure 5: E-course registrants by country

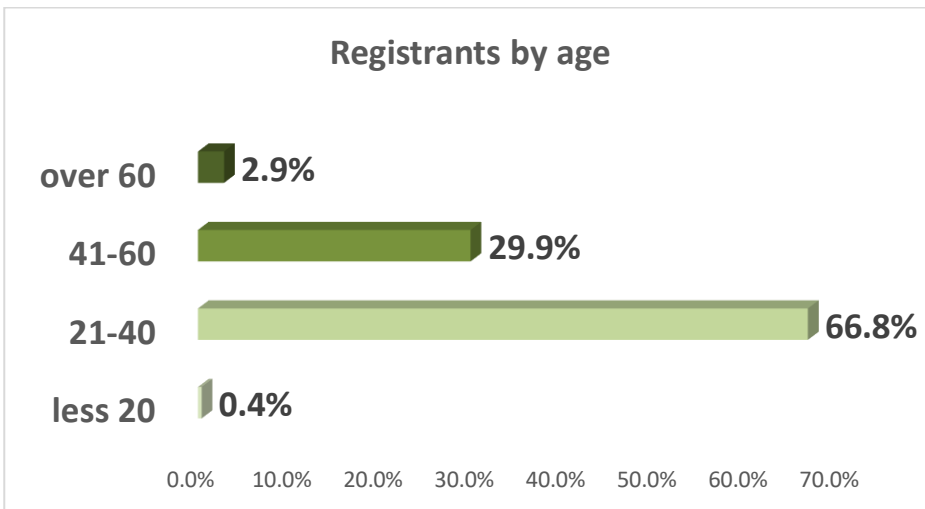


Figure 6: E-course registrants by participants' age

This strong and comprehensive registration shows the interest of SFSC at the global level, the possible impact of the e-course in future innovations, and the contribution to enlarge SFSC stakeholders' network. The following deliverable, 6.11, will present the results of those who completed the course and the course sustainability plan.