



## METRO GROUP Visibility from Catch to Customer

METRO GROUP is a leading global retailing company with approximately 250,000 employees working in over 2,200 outlets in 31 countries throughout Europe and Asia. With sales totalling nearly € 66 billion in 2012/13, METRO GROUP's portfolio of strong brands offers a wide range of services for commercial customers and consumers alike.

METRO GROUP's largest business is METRO Cash & Carry, a leading cash-and-carry wholesaler that offers approximately 50,000 food and non-food products to meet the specific demands of its professional customers such as hotel and restaurant operators, catering firms, independent small retailers, institutions and offices.

"High quality products, food safety, and sustainable practices are all top priorities for METRO," says Britta Gallus, Director of Group Regulatory Affairs, Traceability Project Lead, METRO GROUP. "For us, sustainability is about protecting the environment, conserving natural resources, minimising our impact on the climate, and taking social responsibility for employees and the supply chain."

"Our goal for sustainable practices is quality of life," continues Gallus. "Traceability is the means for ensuring sustainability."

### Making Waves for Sustainability

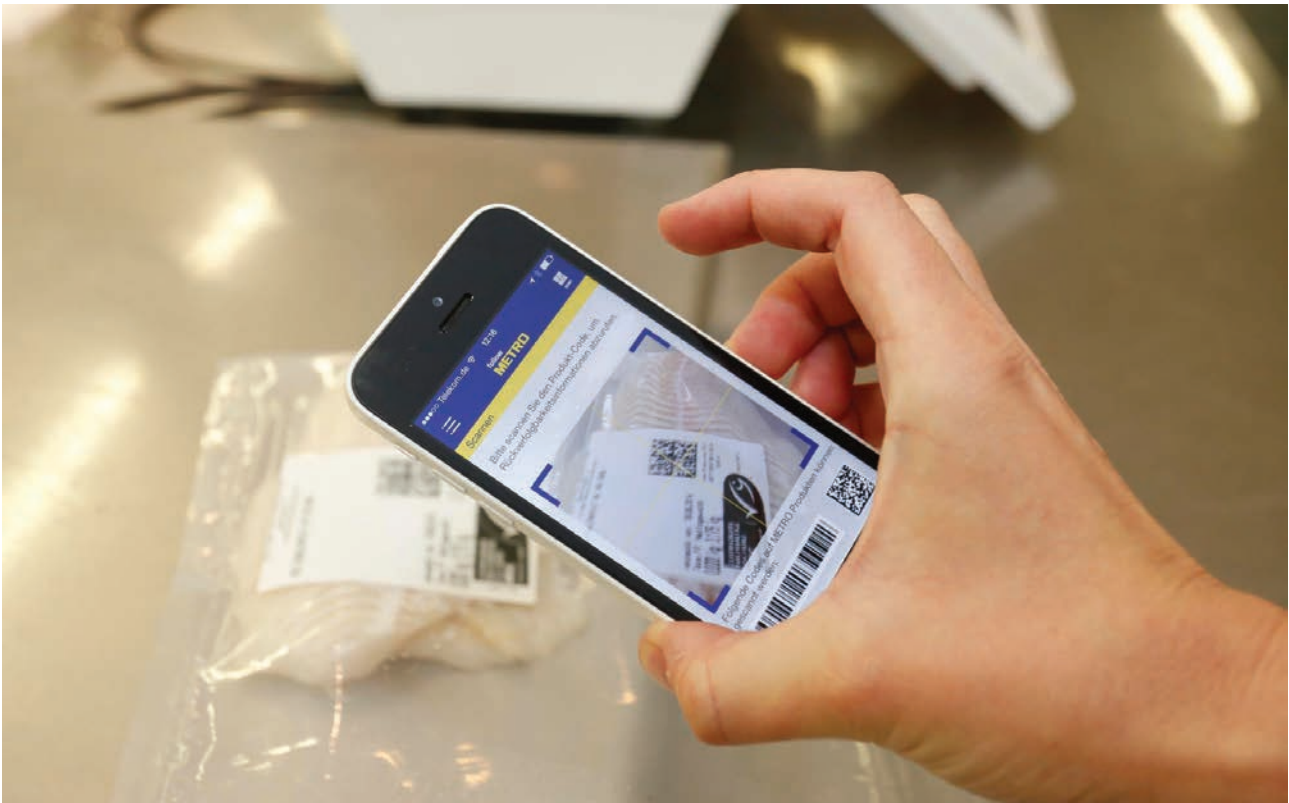
Gallus and her organisation monitor all European Union (EU) regulations and directives and national and international commitments for compliance by METRO GROUP. As early as 2002, EU Regulation 178/2002 addressed the topic of traceability.

"At METRO, for many years we have used GS1's open standards in our supply chain for traceability in business-to-business (B2B) commerce," advises Gallus. "In 2012, we decided to extend those traceability capabilities and product data directly to consumers – throughout the entire METRO Cash & Carry value chain for business-to-business-to-consumer (B2B2C) commerce."

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Director of Group Regulatory Affairs,  
Traceability Project Lead, METRO GROUP*





To support whole chain traceability, METRO needed a suitable partner that was also committed to open standards. Gallus contacted GS1 Germany as a neutral advisor on global standards.

GS1 Germany collaborated with Gallus and Project Manager Lena vom Stein to assemble a team of diverse supply chain partners such as retailers, industry and processors, scientists, and representatives from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to set strategy, determine priorities, and chart a plan of action for whole chain traceability.

To support the needed changes across the company, Gallus and vom Stein included multiple METRO departments in this cross-function project – marketing, logistics, offer management, supply chain management, sales, education and training, and METRO SYSTEMS, the company's own information technology solution provider.

Jens Kungl, Supply Chain Management, Traceability Project Lead, METRO SYSTEMS is the architect of the company's own traceability solution that is built upon a real-time event repository the company first utilised in its Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) programme. It is strictly based on open global standards such as the GS1 visibility-enabling standard EPCIS. The solution is extremely scalable and can easily be extended to other product groups beyond ultra-fresh all the way to non-food items such as consumer electronics and pharmaceuticals.

"The solution is not just able to trace batches or lots, but is inherently ready to also trace individual objects identified by a serial number such as in a GS1 Serialised

Global Trade Item Number (SGTIN). It can be utilised not just for traceability purposes, but also for internal process optimisation for more targeted recalls, in-stock and supply chain management, anti-counterfeiting solutions, and fraud protection," says Kungl.

With tens of thousands of products to choose from, a major decision revolved around the question: Which product and its data should be tested first?

"As the largest fresh fish marketer in Europe, we [METRO Cash & Carry] felt a significant responsibility and opportunity to make a big impact," says vom Stein. "This combined with our company's commitment to sustainable fishing practices made 'fish' the ideal category to initially target for whole chain traceability."

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Project Manager, METRO GROUP*

Gallus explains, “The protection of the oceans and fish stock is not only a priority for our business, it is quickly becoming a priority for our customers; and they need relevant information to help them make informed buying decisions. One of our goals in implementing whole chain traceability was supporting our customers like foodservice operators that, in turn, would be able to provide useful data to their consumers.”

## Fish Data at Your Fingertips

The project team required a global, scalable and sanitised solution. “We needed a platform that could interoperate with our different suppliers’ systems,” adds Gallus.

GS1 Germany recommended fTRACE, an open platform based on GS1 standards that could easily scale for METRO Cash & Carry’s vast array of products and meet METRO’s expectations; fTRACE also offered decentralised data management for ease of integrating diverse databases and interfaces.

GS1 Germany decided to launch an fTRACE traceability pilot in December 2012 with 20 participating trading partners. METRO had its first traceable fish products on shelves one year later – in December 2013.

METRO’s suppliers and other trading partners enter their product and location data in fTRACE or in their own connected databases using GS1 identifiers like Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs) and Global Location Numbers (GLNs). Together with the batch numbers, the unique identification numbers (GTINs + batch numbers) are encoded in barcodes like the GS1 DataBar®.

As fish products travel through the supply chain from fishermen to processors to distribution centres and on to METRO Cash & Carry locations, the identification data is scanned at various points along the way. The GS1 EPCIS and Core Business Vocabulary (CBV) standards together provide the foundation for all trading partners to share real-time information about the movement, history and status of the fish products as they travel through the B2B2C supply chain.

“Professional customers shopping at our METRO Cash & Carry locations can now scan fish barcodes to understand where the fish was caught, how it was caught, the best-by-date, and other important data – all information provided directly by our fish suppliers,” advises Gallus. “Consumers can also scan barcodes or use the fTRACE website to access this same information.”

## Praises from the Global Ocean Commission

In its latest “Mission Ocean” report, the Global Ocean Commission calls upon stakeholders along the supply chain for responsible interaction with the high seas. Co-Chair David Miliband called upon the corporate community to follow METRO GROUP as a role model with its implementation of the whole chain traceability system.

During a subsequent Global Ocean Commission forum, Co-Chair José María Figueres praised METRO GROUP for its dedicated work against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

To read more about the Global Ocean Commission or to download its report, visit [www.globaloceancommission.org](http://www.globaloceancommission.org).





## Calling All Suppliers

With the pilot's successful conclusion, METRO Cash & Carry Germany has commenced communicating METRO's request to all fish suppliers for participation in fTRACE, with the addition of meat producers in May 2014.

"After just a few months, the majority of our fish and meat suppliers have started the fTRACE onboarding process," says vom Stein. "We anticipate that by the end of 2014, we'll have 170 fish and meat suppliers using the traceability system in Germany alone."

While some investments are needed, the transition to fTRACE has been relatively straightforward for most METRO suppliers. "Almost all of our suppliers are already using GS1 standards that reside in their company's databases," explains Gallus. "And because of EPCIS and its open architecture, there is no need for suppliers to replace their existing systems to interface with fTRACE. GS1 Germany also provides training as part of the onboarding process, making it as efficient as possible for suppliers to join."

In the midst of onboarding Germany's fish and meat suppliers, METRO has lost no time reaching out to other countries – Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, Hungary, Czech and Slovakia, and even China and Turkey – about participating in the traceability platform.

Regarding their endless energy and enthusiasm, Gallus sums it up this way, "As a global company, we intend to have a truly global B2B2C traceability network. It's a commitment we have made for the benefit of our customers and the well-being of our consumers and planet."

### For more information

To see how traceability works at METRO Cash & Carry, view the video at [www.metrogroup.de/internet/site/metrogroup/node/447710/Len/index.html](http://www.metrogroup.de/internet/site/metrogroup/node/447710/Len/index.html).

To learn more about fTRACE, visit [www.ftrace.com](http://www.ftrace.com).

Interested in learning more about GS1 standards and traceability?

Contact your local GS1 Member Organisation at: [www.gs1.org/contact](http://www.gs1.org/contact) or the GS1 Global Office at [contactus@gs1.org](mailto:contactus@gs1.org).

Special thanks to: **METRO GROUP**  
MADE TO TRADE.

