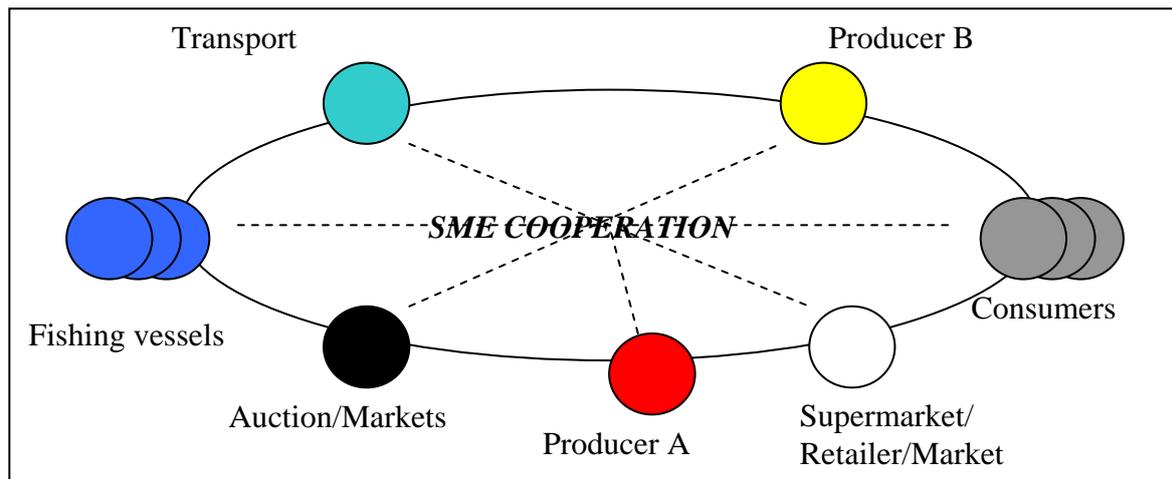


## Utilisation of chain traceability – a possibility for SMEs stay competitive in the future

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A large amount of the work taking place in the traceability area in SEAFOODplus can be utilised by the industry right away.

The development of the vocabulary has enabled companies to transfer information in an easy and unambiguous way. The vocabulary consists of files where the main information pieces have been explained and translated to the main EU languages. This vocabulary is directed at software engineers and is used by them today when they develop traceability software for the seafood industry.

Companies now have the possibility to add specific information on catch areas to their product by utilising the free SEAFOODplus 'map service' available on the website. This is the slow start of story telling towards customers which is a highly estimated feature in the future market place. According to researchers, 'story telling' will be one of the main keys to success in the fish business in the future. A story about a fish product can for instance contain the catch date, the catch area and the name of the fishing vessel. Traceability is a must in order to tell a trustworthy story.

A newly developed Pelagic Information Programme (PIP) is now ready for test in practice. PIP is an inventory and planning tool for pelagic fishing vessels, but it also registers relevant information in a standardised way and makes transfer of information to shore possible. It is possible to plan future fisheries from registered catches. From an overview map, it is possible to look for alternative catch possibilities. The first version is developed in English and Danish, but the programme will later be able to 'speak' most other relevant EU languages and Norwegian. The programme will be available for free for all pelagic vessels (species like herring, sardine and mackerel) after final tests in the start of 2008.

A theoretical model for how SMEs can work together instead of competing against each other has been developed, too. In other branches, for instance the car industry, it has been shown for years that the overall chain performance and not least, chain profitability, can be enhanced by working closely together.

The model is meant to be used in the fresh fish business. The idea is to make the model such that SMEs can create strategic partnerships and cooperation in the whole chain in order to make them more competitive.

The keywords in this respect are 'traceability' and 'quality assurance'. Without traceability, no one will be capable of trusting each other more than today and if quality assurance is lost, quality information is not valid.

The model will be presented at an overall level.