

IBM Newsroom

## **IBM, Government of Vietnam and FXA Group Join Forces to Ensure Global Seafood Safety**

### **Strategic Collaboration Enables Smarter Food with Greater Safety and Quality Across the Entire Food Supply Chain**

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HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam

IBM and FXA Group today announced a first of a kind collaboration with the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) and the Vietnamese State Agency for Technological Innovation (SATI) that will accelerate the adoption of traceability solutions to improve global food safety.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090416/IBMLOGO> )

As part of a pilot project, IBM and FXA will collaborate with several local technology companies in Vietnam to provide a system that will use Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to track Vietnamese seafood exports -- a market worth more than US\$4.25 billion in 2008. The goal of this strategic initiative will allow tracking of the origin of Vietnamese seafood exports and help ensure seafood's freshness upon its arrival in global markets.

The food industry is facing some of the most challenging market conditions in its history. Consumer pressure and industry requirements for quality and traceability are driving producers to provide more detail on products. With foods being sourced across international borders, consumers are demanding to know more about the products they buy and the conditions they were grown and kept in -- from farm to dinner table.

Over the past several months, SATI has been working with IBM and other business partners to apply new technologies in food safety, including sea and aquaculture products for export. IBM, in collaboration with FXA, SATI and VASEP, held a seminar on May 12 in Can Tho city, Vietnam, to introduce seafood traceability systems using IT and RFID technology.

"Many countries have set strict regulations and industry requirements for monitoring of the food transportation process and traceability of the origin of the food," Dr Chu Ngoc Anh, Director of SATI. "The application of advanced technology such as RFID and traceability solutions can help Vietnamese seafood producers meet international industry standards and increasingly strict technical requirements. This will help

increase the quality and productivity of the industry, and enhance the value of our exports."

"In the long term, advanced traceability solutions can help boost the quality and prestige of Vietnamese seafood industry in the global market," Dr Chu added.

As part of the collaboration, IBM and FXA Group's traceability technologies will be tested at selected Vietnamese farms which export seafood to retailers in Japan, the U.S. and Europe. Using FXA technology, the organizations will be able to collect the critical data about each batch of shrimp and other seafood -- which farm it came from, where it was processed, its current location, temperature, and other relevant data. IBM technology will make that information accessible to all the parties involved in the seafood supply chain -- including wholesalers, shippers, and retailers. Additionally, IBM technology will make it possible to trace individual boxes of frozen shrimp with a serial number.

The technology allows the collection of details such as a piece of shrimp came from which farm, at what temperature the batch of shrimp was stored or when and how the shrimp is harvested. If something goes wrong, retailers and authorities can pinpoint where the problem food is, arrange a targeted recall and potentially minimize the number of people affected.

"We are confident the new technology will help us achieve the goal of meeting the highest seafood industry standards," said Nguyen Hoai Nam, VASEP's Deputy General Secretary at Can Tho seminar. "There is a proven record of some seafood processing and exporting companies in Thailand benefiting from the technology. In the future, we want to have many more seafood companies to use the technology to boost the quality of their seafood products in Vietnam."

Vietnam is among the world's top 10 largest seafood exporters. VASEP, whose members account for 80 percent of the country's total seafood export revenue, is committed to ensuring high quality and safety of the seafood exported from Vietnam.

"In collaboration with retailers and government agencies, we are increasing consumer confidence by providing innovative technologies for tracing not only the origins and ingredients in food but the path they have traveled on before they arrive at stores," said Girish Vasudevan, Territory Executive, IBM Vietnam.

## Technology for Smarter Food

In the food industry, the full value of traceability is achieved when producers and their trading partners can

access and share information about food from the farm to the dinner table. IBM's InfoSphere Traceability Server software allows trading partners to track products as they move through the global supply chain. The IBM software is fully compliant with GS1 EPC global Electronic Product Code Information Services (EPCIS) standard for capturing and sharing information on a product's location, temperature, and other relevant data.

OpsSmart, FXA's food traceability solution, has been tested in successful private and government implementations in the produce, seafood, poultry and livestock industries. The software can be used with various data capture technologies such as linear barcodes, 2-D barcodes and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems. FXA technology provides building blocks that can accommodate all manner of traceability needs, while IBM's software ensures that this trusted information can be securely shared and exchanged with the appropriate parties from the producer, to the manufacturer to the retailer.

## About IBM Smart Food

IBM is providing businesses and governments with the technology and expertise needed to create a smarter, safer food supply for consumers around the world. The company's researchers, consultants, and software developers have already built food traceability systems for customers in Canada, Germany, and Norway. For more information, visit:

<http://www.ibm.com/ibm/ideasfromibm/us/smartplanet/topics/food/20081208/index.shtml?&re=spf>

<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/data/infosphere/traceability-server/>

About Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP)

Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) is a non-governmental organization set up to support the development of Vietnam's seafood industry. Its members include leading Vietnamese seafood producers and exporters and companies providing service to the seafood sector. Seafood exports of VASEP members represent 80% of the total seafood exports of Vietnam. For more information about VASEP, please visit <http://vasep.com.vn/vasep/edailynews.nsf/HomePage>

## Vietnamese State Agency for Technological Innovation (SATI)

State Agency for Technological Innovation (SATI) promotes and supports the organization and enterprise in Vietnam to increase their technical knowledge and to deploy technology to improve the productivity, their product and service quality and competitiveness.

## About FXA Group

FXA Group is a leading provider of enterprise traceability solutions across multiple segments of the food industry. This creates significant value for each business partner in the food supply chain, by increasing revenues through differentiating products, gaining easier market access and creating operational efficiencies. Please visit [www.fxagroup.com](http://www.fxagroup.com) for more information.

### Contact:

Harriet Ip  
65-6418-1521  
Mobile: 65-8161-8505  
[harrieti@sg.ibm.com](mailto:harrieti@sg.ibm.com)

Kaveri Camire  
917-472-3440  
Mobile: 914-625-6395  
[kcamire@us.ibm.com](mailto:kcamire@us.ibm.com)

Nancy Kaplan  
914-766-1849  
Mobile: 914-714-2299  
[nkaplan@us.ibm.com](mailto:nkaplan@us.ibm.com)

### First Call Analyst:

FCMN Contact: [nkaplan@us.ibm.com](mailto:nkaplan@us.ibm.com)

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CONTACT: Harriet Ip, +65-6418-1521, or mobile, +65-8161-8505, [harrieti@sg.ibm.com](mailto:harrieti@sg.ibm.com), or Kaveri Camire, +1-917-472-3440, or mobile, +1-914-625-6395, [kcamire@us.ibm.com](mailto:kcamire@us.ibm.com), or Nancy Kaplan, +1-914-766-1849, or mobile, +1-914-714-2299, [nkaplan@us.ibm.com](mailto:nkaplan@us.ibm.com), all of IBM

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