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FLUID-WIN

Finance, Logistic and Production Integration Domain
by Web-based Interaction Network

Deliverable D31

FLUID-WIN Readiness Requirements

Release 1



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1 Management Summary

The FLUID-WIN consortium has defined prerequisites that should be considered before involving an SME into a FLUID-WIN environment. Companies that fulfil these requirements are declared “FLUID-WIN ready”.

Technical details for this readiness are given in detail in the deliverable D17 (FLUID-WIN Readiness Handbook), including the general FLUID-WIN concepts as well as the activities required to become a FLUID-WIN user differentiated by the domains. As this information is already publically available, this report D31 does not repeat the existing document D17, but amends it by providing a more management-oriented view: it defines the qualification required for an institution that provides the service of awarding “FLUID-WIN Readiness” to supplier companies. For this purpose, it first identifies the requirements for such SME, classified as:

- Human capabilities prerequisites
- IT Infrastructure requirements
- Domain-specific and technological competences

The FLUID-WIN consortium is aware that such requirements cannot be given in full precision. Also, judging if requirements are fulfilled can only be performed adequately if there is also good experience with the know-how that is required. Thus, self-assessment of a company with respect to the requirements seems not feasible. Therefore, it is proposed that suitable institutions provide this judgement and declare a company “FLUID-WIN ready” on request. This suitability will be proven by eight groups of criteria:

- Knowledge from industrial sectors
- Areas of expertise
- Reference projects
- Expertise with respect to specific FLUID-WIN implementations
- Human capabilities
- Domain-specific and technological competences
- Quality management implemented
- Procedures for security and confidentiality

Immediately after the project, assessment institutions are selected project partners. The consortium will support the application of further institutions, encouraging especially institutions from countries that are not yet covered.



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3 Introduction

The main strategic objective of the FLUID-WIN project is to establish an innovative business model and IT platform to support the cooperation of networked enterprises along the supply chain. In the case of networks which are organised by large companies, the advanced IT background is usually available for the parties to manage electronic data and document exchange.

However, in most of the cases supply chain networks are constituted by SMEs, which rarely have the proper collaborative IT background. FLUID-WIN is addressed to those networks. Therefore, the consortium has defined prerequisites that should be considered before involving them into a FLUID-WIN environment (chapter 4). Companies that fulfil these requirements are declared “FLUID-WIN ready”.

The FLUID-WIN consortium is aware that such requirements cannot be given in full precision. Also, judging if requirements are fulfilled can only be performed adequately if there is also good experience with the know-how that is required. Both facts will lead to the consequence, that self-assessment of a company with respect to the requirements seems not feasible. Companies might easily identify if they do not fulfil one of the requirements at all, but they will rarely be able to judge if they fulfil a requirement, sufficiently.

Therefore, it is proposed that suitable institutions provide this judgement and declare a company “FLUID-WIN ready” on request. Normally, this will be a standard service before introducing a company into a FLUID-WIN network and can be done by the FLUID-WIN partners.

In order to open the FLUID-WIN results to the public, this public document lists prerequisites that such institutions need to have. The consortium will (after the end of the project) provide the right to prove FLUID-WIN readiness to institutions that demonstrate availability of the required knowledge, which is specified in chapter 5. First rules for the procedure of providing the rights are characterized in chapter 6.

4 Requirement Analysis Related to SMEs

4.1 Human Capabilities

Those SMEs who would like to use FLUID-WIN functionalities to manage their service providers, have to be ready to understand the general concept of the FLUID-WIN business integration model, and implement a new way of business processes in terms of cooperation with external companies. Therefore, the necessary human capabilities have to be available at the company. This could be provided, for example, by a supply chain manager, who is responsible for the improvement of the supply chain and logistic processes. The company should have managers (persons in charge of business success) who are open for innovative solutions, understand the new possibilities of information and communication technologies, and have strong commitment on improving their business and enhancing the quality of services and products. If a company has already implemented TQM/ISO based quality standards or is obligated to follow strict organisation rules to fulfil the market requirements, it could be an advantage. In this case, the use of a new business communication solution will be inserted into the company regulation, and will not be avoidable by the employees because of the precise regulation. The employees of the company have to be motivated and open for new solutions. The users have to have preliminary experience with IT systems, using Internet and Internet-based solutions. The company has to have a clear organization structure, with clearly defined responsibilities, as well as motivated and trained staff to be able to implement FLUID-WIN.

The FLUID-WIN readiness assessment institution has to collect the most important information related to human capabilities, the organisation, persons in charge, previously used systems and practices, quality systems, internal regulations, general behaviour of employees and managers related to motivation and openness for new ways of communication and IT applications.

4.2 Infrastructure

SMEs who would like to use FLUID-WIN need infrastructure to access the Internet. The FLUID-WIN Platform services will be provided as an ASP agreement. Therefore, additional servers and software licence investment are not needed to implement FLUID-WIN. At the user side, PC or notebook infrastructure and general operation systems (MS Windows) are required. If a company would like to run the Logistic Order Entry Application (LOR EA), this part of the system has to be installed on the client side PCs. LOR EA requires additional .NET framework.

4.3 Domain-specific and Technological Competences

An SME that would like to efficiently use the FLUID-WIN solution has to have external or internal resources to establish the necessary integration to the Platform. It means that the exported data files have to be prepared by the user company, and the data import has to be solved by interface development. In the ideal case, the company has an internal IT system supervisor. Alternatively, a contracted company that is operating the ERP solution and other applications has a good knowledge on the ERP database structure and could be an expert in the system integration team.

The user company has to have human resources that can detect, understand and forward failure messages to the first level support company.

In case of Internet breakdowns, the user company has to have a person in charge, who is able to check the gateway administration, detect the failures and forward it to the proper maintenance contact. Ideally, this person should also be available to manage control and monitoring processes.

FLUID-WIN is going to improve the efficiency of the whole supply chain. The company has to have managers with proper knowledge and motivation to understand and analyse the platform information, support decision making based on Platform data and implement new measures to improve the processes. The company has to be open to cooperate with external consultants as well, to get insight into best practices in order to improve the process efficiency.



The FLUID-WIN assessment institution, therefore, has to collect information of the IT staff, its competencies and experience, has to ask for external IT companies and their responsibility areas, has to measure management skills to improve supply chain processes.

5 Requirement Analysis Related to FLUID-WIN Readiness Assessment Institutions

Organisations that provide a “Readiness Certificate” have to be familiar with the FLUID-WIN general concept and functionalities and have a good understanding of target groups and their needs. The candidates have to demonstrate a proven track record on the domain areas like logistics, supply chain management, finance, production and business process management.

The following evaluation criteria have to be taken into account before accepting an organisation as FLUID-WIN readiness assessment institution.

5.1 Industry

Independently from the form of the organisation (e.g. university, RTD institute, association, consultancy firm etc.), to be a FLUID-WIN readiness centre, it has to provide services in the field of industry-oriented research, consultancy and business development activities with at least 5 years of history. Preferred industry sectors are:

- Automotive
- Machinery
- Aerospace
- Chemicals
- Pharmaceuticals
- Construction

Preferred service providing sectors are:

- logistics
- transportation
- distribution
- freight forwarding
- warehousing
- packaging
- financial services

In any case, the institutions needs to demonstrate deep knowledge in the IT environments related to the sector addressed.

5.2 Areas of Expertise

Ideal candidates for FLUID-WIN assessment institutions provide the following services for industry, mainly for SMEs:

- Consultancy – BPR, BPM
- Industry driven research
- Logistic process optimisation
- IT management, strategy consultancy
- Financial oriented consultancy – trade finance
- Business development

- Strategy management
- Project management
- Knowledge management
- Teaching, coaching

5.3 References

FLUID-WIN assessment institutions have to deliver a reliable list of reference projects with a short description of the reference company activity, its provided services, scope and objectives of the projects, and the achieved results. The focus should be set on references which are projects in the manufacturing and service providing industry.

5.4 Specific Experience

The assessing institution should be able to judge FLUID-WIN readiness based on suitable experience with the FLUID-WIN Platform use. This could be achieved by involvement in one or more previous FLUID-WIN installation projects as a company, be hiring personnel from other companies that have conducted such installation, or by suitable training provided by any of the FLUID-WIN project partner (or later: distributor).

5.5 Human Capabilities

The FLUID-WIN assessment institutions have to have the proper staff to execute the preliminary consultancy phase at the potential FLUID-WIN users. The information which can influence the FLUID-WIN readiness has to be collected by the assessor, analysed and reported. The assessor has to be able to decide if the company is ready to implement the system, or what kind of additional investment or other changes are necessary to achieve the readiness status.

The assessor has to have the proper human capabilities like:

- Consultants
- Project management skills
- Reporting and documentation staff

to fulfil the requirements of the preliminary assessment phase.

5.6 Domain-specific and Technological Competences

The assessment institution has to understand the FLUID-WIN professional concept. Therefore, the consultants and staff involved in this process have to have skills and experience in supply chain management, IT and financial services. Without the necessary technological and domain competencies, the institution is not able to measure the company readiness to use FLUID-WIN.

5.7 Quality Management

Preferably, the assessor has already implemented ISO 9000ff., TQM, and/or other suitable quality management systems. In any case, the assessor has to implement a standardized documentation and assessment procedure, conducted as preliminary regulated process and not as ad-hoc activities.

Project Management (e.g. PMI) certificates would be an advantage for demonstrating a project-oriented attitude and professional management of consultancy services.



5.8 Security and Confidentiality Issues

The FLUID-WIN assessment institution has to follow clear ethical rules and have a contract with each employee and all external consultants to manage information as confidential. The institution has to be able to ensure that the documentation and electronic data will be stored on secure virtual and physical places avoiding fraudulent access of sensitive information.

In the frame of an audit, the institution has to demonstrate that data, information and documentation are managed in a secure and trustable way.

6 Institutions to Provide “FLUID-WIN Readiness”

6.1 Entitled Institutions

As of the end of the FLUID-WIN project (October 2008), the project partners as given in table 1 are entitled to provide the FLUID-WIN Readiness Certificate. The contact points can be found at the FLUID-WIN web site.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Readiness Certificate Provider</i>
Germany	Fraunhofer IPK
Hungary	Régens
Italy	Joinet S.r.L.
Malta	AcrossLimits
Slovakia	TUK
Spain	Labein

Table 1: Institutions to provide FLUID-WIN Readiness by October 2008

6.2 Procedure for New Entitlements

Further European institutions may apply for the right to provide the official FLUID-WIN Readiness. For these institutions this might be an additional marketing point, if they work in a closely related area, e.g. in the B2B IT business.

This right will be given without any charge, until a suitable number of such institutions are available in a country.

Institutions will have to apply at any of the providers listed in section 6.1, providing suitable information about existing know-how and experience with the content and the structure provided in chapter 5 of this document. If this provider accepts the request, it will ask for the second acceptance by any other of the providers named in section 6.1 for co-approval. If positive, the applying institution will receive a certification letter that entitles them to act as Readiness Certificate Provider for a given period (usually for two years). Re-application is possible and should just demonstrate that the institution still works in the required fields and did not lose any of the required knowledge in the meantime.

Institutions may apply to act in one of the FLUID-WIN domains, only (e.g. Finance) and will then be accepted only for this domain. However, such companies will need to show that they own sufficient basic knowledge about the other FLUID-WIN domains that they can perform their analysis within a domain-integrated environment.

Accepted Readiness Providers will be listed on the FLUID-WIN web site.