Feeding America Data Synchronization Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions for Feeding America Suppliers

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REVISION HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a compilation of frequently asked questions, and their associated answers, relative to Feeding America's® Data Synchronization initiative. It pertains to all suppliers or product donors that want to synchronize data with Feeding America.

1.0 FEEDING AMERICA

- **Q: Who is Feeding America?**

    o   A: Feeding America is the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, with more than 200 member food banks serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The Feeding America network secures and distributes 3 billion pounds of donated food and grocery products annually through a network of approximately 61,000 food assistance agencies, such as food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters and after-school programs. Feeding America also purchases millions of dollars of product from hundreds of suppliers to fill the donation gaps.

- **Q: Why should I publish and synchronize data with Feeding America?**

    o   A: The Feeding America national office and its member food banks independently create and assign unique identifiers to track and manage the 3 billion pounds of food that move through our network annually. These unique identifiers or SKUs (stock keeping units) vary from food bank to food bank even for the same grocery item. We are excited to be working with 1SYNC to standardize on the UPC/GTIN identifiers as a means to improve operations.

    o   Not only will utilizing the UPC code will allow us to improve operations (inventory management, transportation, product statistics), but also food safety (product recalls and traceability) and nutritional analysis (nutrition facts, ingredients, allergens, all of which will in turn allow us to better serve our product donors with increased efficiencies.

    o   Feeding America has completed the GDS implementation and is ready to receive complete and accurate electronic product data from our suppliers through 1SYNC's data pool.

2.0 GENERAL DATA SYNCHRONIZATION QUESTIONS

- **Q: What is Data Synchronization?**

- o A: Data synchronization is the electronic transfer of standardized **product** and **location** information between trading partners and the continuous synchronization of that data over time. When this data is exchanged via a central global repository - GS1 Global Registry™, it is referred to as Global Data Synchronization.

  Product information includes:
  – Item attributes controlled by the supplier, e.g., Global Trade Item Number (GTIN), Size, Weight, Height, Brand, UPC code

  Location information includes:
  – Global Location Number (GLN) – Locations involved in trade such as company headquarters, billing departments, and ship-to addresses

- **Q: What is the Global Data Synchronization Network® (GDSN®)?**

  - o A: The GDSN is an automated, standards-based global environment that enables secure and continuous data synchronization. This allows all trading partners to have consistent item data in their systems at the same time, ensuring that all parties in the supply chain are working with the same data. The GDSN helps to save time and money for all organizations by eliminating steps to correct inaccurate data.

  - o A: The GDSN enables the GS1 Global Registry and a network of interoperable, certified data pools that enable data synchronization per GS1 System standards.

- **Q: What are the benefits of synchronizing data through the GDSN?**

  - o A: There are several benefits, including:
    – Allows real-time item maintenance for specific fields
    – Provides accurate, standards based, synchronized data that reduces inefficiencies in the supply chain
    – Ensures dimensions are correct and stored at the each, case, warehouse pack, and pallet levels

- **Q: What is a data pool? What is a GDSN-certified data pool?**

  - o A: An entity that provides its customers data synchronization services and a single point of entry to the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN) is called a data pool.

  - o A: Data pools must be certified per GS1 System standards to operate within the GDSN. Data pools interoperate with the GS1 Global Registry and each other. Example: 1SYNC Data Pool.

- **Q: Where can I find a list of GDSN-certified data pools?**

- o A: The GS1 website has a list of GDSN-certified data pools with contact information. You can find the list here http://www.gs1.org/productssolutions/gdsn/

- **Q: What is a company prefix?**

  - o A: A company prefix is a globally unique number assigned to companies by GS1 Member Organizations (GS1 US in the United States) to create the identification numbers of the GS1 System. It is comprised of a GS1 Prefix and a Company Number.

- **Q: What is a GLN?**

  - o A: GLN is an acronym for "Global Location Number" and refers to the globally unique GS1 System identification number for legal entities, functional entities, and physical locations. A GLN is comprised of 13 digits that together represent a GS1 Company Prefix, Location Reference, and 'check digit'. Supply side trading partner locations generally include corporate headquarters, regional offices, warehouses, plants, and distribution centers. Demand side trading partner locations generally include corporate headquarters, divisional offices, stores, and distribution centers.

  - o **Note:** The Feeding America GLN is **1100001016020**.

- **Q: What is a GTIN?**

  - o A: GTIN is an acronym for "Global Trade Item Number" and refers to the globally unique GS1 System identification number for products and services. A GTIN may be 8, 12, 13, or 14 digits in length, represented as GTIN-8, GTIN-12, GTIN-13, and GTIN-14, respectively.

- **Q: Is data synchronization an Information Technology (IT) function? Does it require IT resources?**

  - o A: Data Synchronization is a business process that uses technology in its implementation. For a successful implementation, it is recommended to have executive sponsorship and technology resources allocated to this program.

- **Q: Is data synchronization just another term for EDI?**

  - o A: No. EDI is used in the transmission of many e-business transactions, whereas data synchronization is the electronic transmission of standardized product and location information.

- **Q: What is the Global Product Classification (GPC) code?**

  - o A: A GPC code is an 8-digit number that represents a classification of products. It is a 'flat' classification system based on attributes and values.

Global Product Classification is a required element of the global data based on attributes, and values and is a required element of the GDSN.

Note: If you need a list of GPC codes contact your data pool (e.g. 1SYNC). To request a GPC code to be added to standards, work with your data pool (e.g. 1SYNC) or your Solution Partner to submit a change request.

- **Q: How do I know if I need to assign a new Universal Product Code (UPC) when I make changes to an existing product?**

    A: Follow the GS1 Standards GTIN Allocation Rules. For example, if the consumer net content changes, then a new UPC must be assigned. For more information on GTIN Allocation Rules visit www.gs1.org/gtinrules. Contact your data pool for more information.

3.0 FEEDING AMERICA DATA SYNCHRONIZATION INITIATIVE

3.1 General Feeding America Questions

- **Q: Are all of Feeding America suppliers required to implement data synchronization via the GDSN?**

    o A: At this time Feeding America recommends that all of its suppliers begin utilizing the GDSN.

3.2 Data Pools and Solution Partners

- **Q: What is a GDSN-certified data pool?**

    o A: See Section 2 of this document for answers to general Data Synchronization questions

- **Q: What/who is 1SYNC™?**

    o A: 1SYNC is a neutral, GDSN-certified data pool and is working closely with Feeding America to implement its data synchronization initiative. Feeding America uses the 1SYNC Data Pool Solution for its GDSN services.

    o A: A subsidiary of GS1 US, 1SYNC supports and works with over 50 retailers and 5,000 suppliers (of all sizes). To learn more about 1SYNC and its services, visit www.1SYNC.org or call +1 866.280.4013, Option 1.

- **Q: Do I have to sign up with 1SYNC™?**

  - o A: You need to select a GDSN-certified data pool to get started and 1SYNC is a GDSN-certified data pool. If you are not currently a member of 1SYNC, we recommend you get started right away by contacting them at +1 866.280.4013, Option 1.

- **Q: How much does implementing data synchronization cost?**

  - o A: 1SYNC, operates on a cost-recovery model and fees are calculated based on your company's total annual sales. Visit http://1sync.org/subscription_fees.html for more details.

- **Q: What is a 1SYNC Solution Partner?**

  - o A: A Solution Partner is a company that enables supply chain functions through the provision of products and services. A *1SYNC Certified Solution Partner* refers to a company that has been certified by 1SYNC to connect to the 1SYNC Data Pool. 1SYNC customers have the option to choose a certified Solution Partner to assist in managing their data synchronization initiative. For a full list of *1SYNC Certified Solution Partners*, visit www.1sync.org/partnerships and search for a Solution Partner that meets your needs.

- **Q: Do I have to use a 1SYNC Solution Partner?**

  - o A: 1SYNC provides customers with multiple implementation options to successfully synchronize data with Feeding America. 1SYNC offers implementation tools for customers and has partnered with some of the largest and most well-known companies in the world, including many that suppliers may already be working with today. A supplier can implement with the solution that best fits their needs and requirements.

- **Q: If I have questions and need help to use the 1SYNC system – who should I contact?**

  - o A: For questions associated with GDSN or Feeding America's data synchronization initiative please contact 1SYNC customer support at customersupport@1sync.org or +1 866.280.4013.

- **Q: I use data pool "X" or Solution Partner "Y" and have a question about how to use their system – who should I contact?**

  - o A: For questions associated with GDSN, the first source for information should be your data pool. The data pool you select should be able to answer or provide proper direction for all your questions associated with data synchronization.

3.3   Publishing Data to Feeding America

- **Q: I want to synchronize my item information with Feeding America. Where do I start?**

  - o   A: Please see the Feeding America Implementation Guide for more details regarding implementation requirements or contact Feeding America via email at DataSync@feedingamerica.org.

- **Q: How does Feeding America Subscribe?**

  - o   A: Feeding America will create a subscription for your information provider GLN/Target Market U.S.

- **Q: Is Feeding America checking the Initial Load or New Publication Types for incoming Catalogue Item Notification (CIN) publications?**

  - o   A: Feeding America will accept either publication type, New Item or Initial Item Load.

- **Q: When can I expect to see the Catalog Item Confirmation (CIC Authorization)?**

  - o   A: The ACCEPT Catalogue Item Confirmation (CIC) is generated immediately after Feeding America receives the published items. This is the only CIC that Feeding America will send.

- **Q: How will Feeding America handle ongoing Data Synchronization?**

  - o   A: Suppliers should continue to send changes and correction through GDSN for the items synchronized with Feeding America.