BSFZ SEAL AS PROOF OF INNOVATION CAPABILITY

NORDWEST receives funding for DataConnect research and development project

Dortmund, 3 March 2026 – NORDWEST Handel AG is strengthening its position as an innovation-driven partner in the B2B trade: the trade association has submitted the online product master data platform DataConnect as a research and development project, which has now been officially recognised as an eligible R&D project by the Research Allowance Certification Authority (BSFZ). At the same time, NORDWEST has already been awarded the BSFZ seal for in-house research and development.

With this positive decision, the BSFZ confirms that NORDWEST meets all the key criteria of the Research Allowance Act (FZulG). In particular, the BSFZ assessed the project's novelty, technological risk or uncertainty, and its planned implementation.

DataConnect: Highly scalable data hub with a clear focus on partner benefits

The recognised R&D project centres on the development of DataConnect, a rule- and model-based, scalable data hub for the automated harmonisation and flexible provision of heterogeneous product data in B2B trade. The aim is to automate the processing of several million heterogeneous product data records from more than 300 suppliers for over 1,000 medium-sized specialist dealers and their several hundred connected target systems, including ERP systems, online shops, marketplaces and e-procurement platforms.

The approach deliberately goes beyond traditional data platforms. DataConnect was not developed as a rigid standard system, but as a highly flexible system that can be adapted to the widely varying technical requirements and levels of maturity among partners.

Challenge for small and medium-sized enterprises: high manual effort required to process product data

Medium-sized specialist dealers in particular currently face the challenge of having to manually review and correct widely varying supplier data structures and convert them into different formats in order to integrate them into their target systems. These recurring and error-prone activities tie up considerable human resources among partners. This is exactly where DataConnect comes in.

Objective: Complete automation instead of manual data processing

With DataConnect, NORDWEST is pursuing the clear goal of largely digitising these processes and, in the long term, automating them completely. Different data sources are intelligently harmonised and consolidated, quality-assured and flexibly provided for a wide range of applications – from merchandise management systems and online shops to individual customer systems or platform integrations.

The focus is clearly on the benefits for specialist trade partners: reduced manual effort, lower error rates, faster time to market and noticeable relief in day-to-day operations.

Proven innovation capability and strategic importance

In its statement, the BSFZ expressly confirms that the project has yielded new insights and led to the further development of existing technologies in innovative ways. The structured approach with clearly defined project goals, work packages and milestones demonstrably meets the requirements for systematic research and development.

Martin Reinke, Head of Digital Services & E-Business at NORDWEST, comments: “The recognition of our research and development project confirms our commitment not only to applying digitalisation, but also to actively advancing it in the interests of our specialist trade partners.

DataConnect is specifically designed to reduce complexity and deliver real, measurable benefits in the day-to-day operations of medium-sized businesses.”

Innovation with added value for specialist dealers

With the BSFZ seal and the recognised research funding, NORDWEST underlines its role as a strategic digitalisation partner for specialist dealers. Investments in DataConnect create the foundation for scalable, future-proof data processes and strengthen the long-term competitiveness of the connected companies.

Über die NORDWEST Handel AG:
Die NORDWEST Handel AG mit Sitz in Dortmund gehört seit 1919 zu den leistungsstärksten Verbundunternehmen des Produktionsverbindungshandels (PVH) mit einem Geschäftsvolumen in Höhe von 4.801 Mio. Euro gesamt per 2023. Die Kernaufgaben des Verbandes zur Unterstützung der rund 1.255 Fachhandelspartner aus den Bereichen Stahl, Bau-Handwerk-Industrie und Sanitär- und Heizungstechnik (Haustechnik) liegen in der Bündelung der Einkaufsvolumina, der Zentralregulierung, einem starken Zentrallager sowie in umfangreichen Dienstleistungen. NORDWEST ist auch in Europa, insbesondere in den Schwerpunktländern Österreich, Schweiz, Frankreich, Polen sowie Benelux aktiv.

Herausgeber:
NORDWEST Handel AG
Robert-Schuman-Straße 17
44263 Dortmund
http://www.nordwest.com

Astrid Sassen
Geschäftsbereichsleiterin Marketing & Unternehmenskommunikation
Telefon: +49 (0)231 - 2222 - 3301
E-Mail: a.sassen@nordwest.com

Janine Berghoff
Referentin für Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Telefon: +49 (0)231 - 2222 - 3340
E-Mail: j.berghoff@nordwest.com

Anna Eckart
Referentin für Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Telefon: +49 (0)231 - 2222 - 3341
E-Mail: a.eckart@nordwest.com