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Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Food Data Transparency Partnership

Eco Working Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. The Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP) was announced in the [Government Food Strategy](#) as a partnership between government, industry and civil society experts on the food system to work collaboratively on improving the consistency of available food system data.
2. Supporting the delivery of net zero and our other environmental goals is a key priority. The Eco Working Group (eco WG) of the Food Data Transparency Partnership is therefore being established to introduce consistent scope 3 measurement and reporting for the food and drink sector and a mandatory methodology for eco-labelling. Our ambition is to work to a public consultation by the end of 2023.
3. The eco WG will work closely with the FDTP data Working Group, which is being established to consider the FDTP's technical requirements, and meetings will be sequenced to ensure that their work dovetails. The data WG will consider the Eco WG's methodological and data recommendations and provide advice on the technical feasibility and deliverability of those proposals. This advice will focus on how data is collected, verified, managed and shared along the supply chain, as well as data governance and scalability. This may include the consideration of technical solutions to integrate supply chain data and sustainability data at scale.
4. The Eco WG will set up dedicated Task and Finish groups to look at specific issues in the development of FDTP objectives and build links to existing work on food and data issues.

Aims

5. The aims of the FDTP Eco workstream are:
 - To ensure GHG impact reporting for food and drink companies is consistent, accurate and fair, to enable the industry to reliably monitor progress and focus efforts towards net zero.
 - To ensure consumer information on the environmental impacts of food is consistent, clear and accurate, building a level playing field for product level comparison and enabling consumers to make better informed value-based food choices.

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- To enable government, civil society, investors and the food industry to compare performance on GHG emissions fairly, and to ensure good practice is recognised and supported.
- To effectively collaborate across government, the food and drink industry and wider experts, generating shared solutions to measuring and communicating GHG impact, that could in future be expanded to consider a wider set of specific sustainability issues.

Objectives

6. The eco working group will assist government to:

- **Standardise the methodology and data sources used for measuring and reporting scope 3 GHG emissions of food and drink at a company level and at a product level.**

This is likely to be through endorsing an existing methodology, which is kept up to date with emerging scientific evidence. The standardised product level methodology will form part of any mandatory requirements for food and drink eco-labels taken forward.

- **Establish a consistent reporting mechanism for large food and drink companies to report scope 3 GHG emissions at a company level.**
Data sets, metrics and reporting protocols should be multi purposed and useful to a broad group of stakeholders.
- **Establish the databases that provide consistent and comparable data on emissions factors and environmental impact of food and drink products, to be endorsed by government and supported in their ongoing development by industry.**

These databases should contain the best available data in the data hierarchy for companies to use when reporting or communicating their environmental impact. They should be kept up to date, easily accessible and in line with most current scientific data.

- **Establish a mandatory methodology for voluntary food eco-labels.**

This could be a mandatory multi-metric methodology or a GHG emissions only methodology and may draw on existing eco-label approaches. Additionally, we could explore the introduction of wider marketing rules to prevent greenwashing.

Key Considerations

7. Data reporting requirements do not put unfair burdens on specific parts of the supply chain (e.g., primary producers) or on SMEs.

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8. As the UK is part of a global food supply chain, the working group will need to carefully consider imports, international and trade implications.

Participation Appointments

9. The Eco Working Group co-chairs are Karen Lepper, Deputy Director of Food Data Standards and Sustainability at Defra and Judith Batchelar, EA deputy chair and former Sainsburys director. They have been appointed by Civil Service Senior Responsible Officers for the FDTP, based on their experience and credibility in their sectors.
10. Appointments to the WGs will be made by the co-chairs, based on deep professional expertise and experience of the GHG data and reporting in scope of the WG, and the willingness and commitment to work collaboratively as part of the FDTP on these issues. The membership will be comprised of experts from across industry and civil society.
11. These roles are unpaid. Reasonable expenses will be covered, e.g., in travelling to meetings, although where possible we will work flexibly and remotely.

Roles and responsibilities

12. Time commitment. We estimate that this work will require:
 - a. For co-chairs: 2-3 hours' worth meetings per month (of the WGs + discussions with officials) and a further 2-3 hours' work outside meetings (reading, engagement within the sector);
 - b. For WG members: 1.5 hours' worth meetings per month and up to 6 hours' work outside of meetings (reading, engagement within the sector).
13. The WG members will be asked to consider proposals presented to the group by the FDTP team, by the data WG and by task and finish groups. They will be asked to share views as practitioners working on measuring and communicating GHG data on a day-to-day basis. They will also be asked to gather views from their organisations or networks to inform the work.
14. These estimations are indicative and will depend on the specific programme of work for each WG. We appreciate that people are giving up their time to support this important work, and we will aim to be flexible and sensitive to existing professional commitments and availability in scheduling FDTP business.

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15. To support WG co-chairs and WG members we will provide a clear point of contact within the FDTP civil service programme team. The team will provide the secretariat for the meetings, including liaising with the co-chairs to establish workplans, preparing agendas and papers as needed.

Information sharing and legal issues

16. We want the WG members to be able to bring expertise from their sectors so there will not be any overarching expectation of confidentiality or non-disclosure. However, co-chairs reserve the right to conduct some parts of the meeting under the Chatham House Rule (discussions can be reported but not attributed to individuals or organisations), and members will be expected to keep the content of these discussions confidential. Members should seek permission from the Secretariat before speaking to the media about the FDTP and their involvement in the programme, as unauthorised media contact may result in removal from the group.
17. Meetings will be conducted in a competition compliant manner which will not involve any discussions, decisions or subsequent behavioural change that may be construed as anti-competitive. Members shall not act in a manner that could be construed as advertising or promoting their own business or business concerns or soliciting for business or work.
18. Competition Law concerns can arise in a few ways including from the exchange of sensitive information, from an agreement (or more general understanding) or decisions to boycott or to refuse to deal with certain businesses, agreements amongst competitors to impose unfair trading terms as well as agreements which fix prices, or which otherwise limit output or supply. Failure to adhere to these conditions will result in the premature termination of the meeting.

Review

19. These terms of reference will be reviewed periodically and may be updated with the agreement of members.