



Food Data Transparency Partnership Eco working group minutes

Date	20 March 2023
Time	14:00-15:00
Venue	Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Co-Chairs:

Judith Batchelar	Food sector expert and Environment Agency Deputy Chair
Karen Lepper	Deputy Director Food Data, Standards and Sustainability, Defra

Seventeen Eco working group members in attendance

Julie Pierce, co-chair of Data working group and Director of Information and Science, FSA

FDTP team

The Eco working group is a stakeholder engagement group that provides input on policy development as part of an open policy design process. These discussions do not reflect agreed government policy.

1. Welcome and introductions

- Karen Lepper (KL) welcomed members to the first Eco working group (Eco WG) meeting of the Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP).
- KL briefly explained the background to the FDTP including the aim to use better and more transparent data to drive positive change in the food system, and explained progress to date on the Eco WG:
 - The co-chairs met with the Defra FDTP team on several occasions to develop the draft Eco WG terms of reference and draft workplan.
 - The Defra team has also made connections with key stakeholder groups with a view to aligning and not duplicating work.

- KL explained that the Eco WG will operate under the Chatham House Rules. Officials will be as open as possible with the group and will be clear about the limits of the work and the need to keep the scope focussed on immediate government priorities.
- KL confirmed that the FDTP team will share documents and resources with the group on SharePoint and that notes from each meeting will be shared with the group. **FDTP team to action.**
- KL asked the group to state if they have any concerns about the FDTP team sharing member names and organisations and details of Eco WG discussions with wider stakeholders.
- It was confirmed that the group will operate in a competition law compliant manner.

2. Terms of reference

- Judith Batchelar (JB) reflected on the scope and terms of reference of the Eco WG:
 - The priority for the Eco WG is scope 3 emissions. Data sources and methodologies need to be standardised to inform both corporate reporting and consumer information.
 - Most businesses are keen to resolve differences and inconsistencies in scope 3 reporting because of SBTi and net zero commitments.
 - The work on consumer information is important because of reputational risk around greenwashing and associated actions being taken by the ASA and CMA.
 - We will tap into existing Task & Finish groups (T&F) such as WRAP and Courtauld groups. We are creating a complex stakeholder map to ensure that those who have something to offer have a route to contribute.
 - This must also be an international initiative and so the Eco WG will have representatives from across the UK isles as well as global initiatives such as WBCSD.
 - There is a large amount of work to be done around data including legal requirements, data protection, how data is shared, modelled and standardised.
- Julie Pierce (JP) briefly explained the objectives of the FDTP Data working group (Data WG), which will focus on blockers on data governance, ownership and standards and will mirror the Eco WG terms of reference and ways of working.

The following points were raised in the discussion:

- Some of the goals and objectives in the terms of reference may not be achievable unless a means is developed of allowing data to flow through the supply chain and verifying and tracking data flows. The terms of reference should better clarify how the Eco and Data WGs will work together. JP agreed with this point and confirmed the Eco WG terms of reference will be amended to clarify the join up between these groups.
- It was raised that some points in the terms of reference may be too ambitious and should potentially be reframed. On the objective at point 5, committing to considering how approaches could be expanded to wider metrics may be too ambitious. On the objective at point 6, ensuring that consumer information about the environmental impact of products is clear and consistent may be too large a piece of work and it may be more achievable to focus on GHG emissions first. It was also questioned whether the objective at point 7, to create a level playing field at a product level, is achievable through the objectives and goals expressed in the terms of reference. Finally, whilst considering trade implications and imports is necessary, the group will not be able to reach all the answers at the outset.

- JB confirmed that the group will focus on scope 3 GHG emissions this year whilst being mindful of other metrics.
- A query about the role of Eco WG members was raised. JB clarified that the FDTP team will bring specific proposals to the group and it is asked that members share views as practitioners working in the space on a day-to-day basis.
- It was raised that many commercial organisations are investing to bring about change and emissions factors should reflect these improvements that are being made. JB noted that in standardising emissions factors there are several levels to the data hierarchy.
- It was confirmed that the FDTP team will provide a glossary of all acronyms being used. **FDTP team to circulate a glossary with the minutes.**
- It was confirmed that membership lists for each working group will be circulated to the Eco WG once membership of these groups has been confirmed. **Future action for FDTP team to share WG membership lists.**
- In response to a query, it was confirmed that a methodology has not yet been agreed but the Eco WG will discuss whether it can agree on a consistent or existing approach.
- **FDTP team to circulate an updated and final version of the terms of reference before the next meeting.**

3. Workplan

- The FDTP team set out the workplan for the Eco WG over the coming months:
 - The aim is for consultation by the end of 2023 on both a consistent approach to scope 3 reporting and a mandatory methodology for eco labels. The Eco WG will focus on developing proposals for the consultation.
 - In April's meeting the Eco WG will discuss wider government reporting such as SECR, TCFD and ISSB standards and whether they are suitable mechanisms for food and drink companies to report their scope 3 GHG emissions.
 - In May's meeting the Eco WG will focus on data hierarchies, data quality and availability and whether the data is currently available to allow accurate multi-metric labelling.
- A question was raised about the timing of discussions and outputs between the Data and Eco WGs. The FDTP team confirmed that Eco WG data discussions will be aligned with outputs from the Data WG.

4. Next steps

- JB asked members to review the WRAP documents circulated before the meeting and feedback any initiatives that are missing.
- JB asked members to talk to their own stakeholders about how things work in practice.
- **WG members to feedback anything missing from WRAP documents.**
- JB asked the group to get in touch if there is anything they want to bring to the meetings.
- KL asked the group to get in touch with the co-chairs or FDTP team if they have any concerns.