



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Food Data Transparency Partnership Eco working group minutes

**Date** 24 July 2023  
**Time** 10:00 – 11:30  
**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

### **Twenty-two 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. Welcomes and introductions**

- Karen Lepper (KL) recapped Chatham House rules and SharePoint access.
- KL introduced John Gilliland and Angela Christison from AHDB.
- KL quickly recapped the previous meeting and the agenda and purpose of today's meeting.

## **2. Company reporting mechanism**

- Defra officials set out their proposed approach to align with wider sector agnostic reporting mechanisms being considered by DBT and DESNZ.
- Members were supportive of this approach.

## **3. Company reporting protocols**

- The group agreed that the FDTP should endorse specific protocols for the food and drink sector building on WRAP version 1 protocols to produce version 2.
- There was a discussion about whether there is risk of fragmentation from international standards and WRAP confirmed that their guidance will allow companies to comply with international standards.
- The group also agreed with the need to align with what's happening in Europe on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence directive which will make it compulsory to show how you have done due diligence on your CS reporting.
- The only caveat to the recommendation to support V2 WRAP protocols was the need for the protocols to set out a clear process for measuring and reporting **carbon removals** including reference to GHG Protocol Land Sector and Removals Guidance:
  - The GHG Protocol on the Land Sector Removals Guidance is so complicated that as currently drafted is a barrier to inclusion in inventories. This is something WRAP and others are raising with GHG protocol.
  - The group discussed in the chat whether there should be an ambition to collect actual data from all farms to allow farmers to show reductions in emissions and carbon removals. There were varying views on this and it was acknowledged that data gaps in this area are a potential barrier to incentivising sustainable farming practices and incentivising farmers to collect and share data.
  - One member asked whether WRAP could consider embedding guidance on use of emissions factors, particularly for those sectors with commodity pathways, to respond to FLAG guidance. (FDTP team confirmed this would be covered by the data sources task and finish group, which will feed into v2)

**Action:** FDTP team to discuss how FLAG guidance will be incorporated into WRAP V2(+) protocol with WRAP.

## **4. Use Cases**

The group were generally supportive of using use cases to frame the work but had a few comments:

- Need to be clear that companies will likely mix and match between use cases e.g., a % of scope 3 where emissions are highest or where they can most easily be influenced may require more accurate data to track progress or develop mechanisms to incentivize suppliers. For the rest of the scope 3 emissions the data needs to be good and representative enough to ensure they don't make the wrong choices related to the focus % of emissions.
- Discussed boundaries and whether there is scope to extend to cradle-to-grave. For scope 3 reporting the requirement is to report purchased goods, so in most cases cradle-to-gate boundaries will be used. This is based on current requirements for scope 3 inventories but is inconsistent across businesses and could be a missed opportunity to

incentivise carbon reductions downstream such as reducing food waste. However, for product level data the boundaries of the LCA should be considered on a case-by-case basis. For example, if using the data to manipulate at a raw ingredient level you'd need cradle to gate, and for the full LCA on a product including processing and manufacture you will need cradle to grave.

**Action:** FDTP team to reflect Eco WG comments on use cases in next iteration of the diagram and discuss inclusion in the V2 protocols with WRAP.

## **5. Plans to improve data availability, access and quality- prioritisation**

We have split the breakout room discussions thematically into sections of the data improvement table:

### **Collaborative (industry led) educational/outreach programme for farmers on data collection and regenerative farming practices.**

Not discussed

### ***Mapping of the data that government, assurance bodies, regulators, industry currently collect.***

The Soil Nutrient Health Scheme in Northern Ireland should be added in addition to Bord Bia to share learnings.

**Action:** FDTP team to add SNHS to table (complete)

### ***Defra support for farmers with carbon auditing and developing options to increase uptake of carbon audits on farms.***

Members agreed that improving the collection of primary data on farm should be a key priority. This will improve accuracy of scope 3 reporting and will incentivise carbon reductions on farm.

- AHDB keen to be involved.

**Action:** FDTP team to pass this onto FCP and AHDB to link with the Farm Data Done Better work and farm standards owners.

### ***Task and finish group to consolidate asks from industry to suppliers (including farmers) through pre-competitive agreements.***

Several members thought there could be a role in this space for a regulator or independent 3rd party e.g., the Information Commissioners Office or the Open Data Institute to tackle some of the commercial sensitives and act as an independent facilitator.

- Important to have clear proposals for keeping data safe and for dealing with commercial sensitives.

**Action** – FDTP to investigate options for 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitator and draw together suggested list of group members Aim to launch group by end of 2023.

### ***Improve carbon literacy of food sector***

Group agreed this was an important area so that food systems actors understand why and how their actions are contributing to environmental objectives. However, it will be important to

consider the level of knowledge required to drive action. For some it's very top level, but far more in-depth upskilling may be needed for a smaller group of people. We have to be very realistic about the time people have available for this. E.g., SMEs won't have the time or capacity to become a specialist so whilst we do want to improve carbon literacy, we also need to design guidance that can be implemented by non-experts.

- Important that carbon literacy is aimed at leadership, marketing, sustainability teams and even investors who want guidance on what good looks like and knowing what questions to ask the businesses they are investing in.
- Group agreed that this work would need to be taken forward by Defra plugging into existing initiatives such as: 'Chapter zero', IEMA, the commissioner's office – smart data foundry (Global), ODI, Scope 3 peer group.

Defra should make use of trade associations and membership organisations to amplify the message.

**Action:** FDTP team to add suggestions to the table and engage with organisations working on improving carbon literacy to ensure they are happy to be signposted to.

#### ***Engage and consider support for SMEs***

Plug into existing channels including trade associations who represent SMEs, consortia of young food brands, venture capitalists are who are driving these organisation, EIT Food, corporates with start-up channels.

**Action:** FDTP to consider engagement strategy with SMEs and determine whether there is demand for additional tailored support/guidance (sept onwards)

#### ***Task and finish group to consider approach to data sources***

Seemed to be consensus that establishing one common database that must be used by all companies would take a lot of time and resource and wouldn't be that helpful as it wouldn't enable companies to differentiate as they make carbon reductions.

Therefore, it would be better to have a common set of emissions factors that are representative of current practices in the UK that can be accessed by all actors but also allow companies to use primary data for their specific supply chains if they have it.

- One member suggested that it would be best to have EFs for up to the farm gate and then a second set of EFs for processing. This would allow the farm factors to be updated more frequently than the processing EFs. There are lots of issues with allocation etc when developing EFs past farm gate that might confuse farm EFs.
- One member said it would be good to have EFs for end products as well as unit EFs.

**Action:** FDTP team to reach out to Eco WG members to set up a task and finish group on approach to data sources by September. We will be drafting an expression of interest soon and sharing this to gather group members.

A discussion was had about the benefit of linking up the task and finish groups for example if we collect primary data we would also need a reference benchmark value and then this would tell us the right questions to ask suppliers to reward them for improving on this value. We could choose a couple of key ingredient / product supply chains (e.g., beef, dairy) and follow the

thread through e.g., as a worked example: method + reference data + supplier engagement process.

**Action:** FDTP to add this as a potential action for the data sources task and finish group to take forward

***Prioritisation and funding of more primary research (LCAs) of key food products by industry and government***

Not discussed – could be wrapped up into task and finish group on data sources. FDTP to discuss with T&F group when it is set up.

***Task and finish group working towards product-level standards and guidance.***

Not discussed – FDTP team exploring whether this work could be taken forward by organisations who are focused on product data. Defra and WRAP will aim to establish this group in early 2024.

**6. Defra outputs by end 2023**

- The group agreed with Defra's proposed approach to publication at the end of 2023 including the decision not to consult on scope 3 reporting but to instead publish a policy position paper.
- The group were keen that wider stakeholders were engaged through separate mechanisms if there isn't going to be a consultation.
- Defra confirmed that although government won't consult the policy document will link to the WRAP consultation for anyone who wants to feedback on the technical document.
- Additionally, Defra is expecting the Eco WG to engage their networks in the proposals and roadmap to see if there is anything missing. The FDTP team will do the same.