



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

# Food Data Transparency Partnership

## Design Partnership Group minutes

The Design Partnership 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.

**Date** 13 July 2023  
**Time** 10:00-11:30  
**Venue** Microsoft Teams

### Attendance

#### Co-Chairs:

David Kennedy Director General, Food, Biosecurity and Trade, Defra  
 Chris Tyas Food Industry Advisor to Defra

### Industry

Thirty-nine industry leaders in attendance

### Speakers:

Team Lead, Diet, Obesity and Healthy Behaviours, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, DHSC

Susan Barratt Health Working Group co-chair  
 Non-Exec and former IGD CEO

Judith Batchelar Eco Working Group co-chair  
 Deputy Chair, Environment Agency

Anne Godfrey Data and Technical Working Group co-chair and GS1 CEO

Julie Pierce Data and Technical Working Group co-chair  
 Food Standards Agency, Director of Information and Science

Item	Description and Actions
1.	<p><b>Welcome and introductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chris Tyas (CT) introduced the meeting and welcomed a new member to the Design Partnership Group (DPG), representing Whitbread.</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Working groups – reporting back and future plans</b></p> <p>The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) FDTP team provided an update on the health strand and the working group co-chairs gave an update on their respective working groups.</p> <p><u>Health Working Group</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FDTP team confirmed that DHSC are taking forward work to develop transparent and consistent health metrics. Reporting will be voluntary. By working together, we can ensure that the metrics and voluntary reporting requirements are both feasible and cost effective.</li> <li>FDTP team explained that the FDTP is not about government getting more data, or about government setting targets for businesses. Instead, the focus is to develop a set of metrics that incentivise and more effectively measure progress towards improving the healthiness of food, and to encourage food companies to demonstrate progress on the healthiness of their sales.</li> <li>Susan Barratt (SB) confirmed that the launch of the Health Working Group (HWG), is due to take place face-to-face on 21 July 2023.</li> <li>HWG members who have relevant technical expertise and experience have now been appointed, representing sectors across the food and drink industry. <b>Action:</b> HWG membership to be shared with DPG members</li> <li>SB noted that the focus of the first HWG meeting will be to discuss the group's terms of reference, ways of working, including with non-HWG members, and to agree the group's work plan.</li> <li>SB confirmed that the HWG will work closely with the Data Working Group (Data WG) on the technical requirements and governance needs of voluntary reporting.</li> <li>SB explained that a set of principles have been developed to provide clear communication for those who have an interest in the HWG, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with trade associations and civil society organisations in advance of each HWG meeting to seek views.</li> <li>Bilateral engagement with HWG members to discuss sector-wide feedback.</li> <li>Invitation to stakeholders to make their interest in HWG progress known to the FDTP health team. Directions will be provided for where stakeholders can sign up to receive written summaries of HWG discussions and access further information relating to the HWG.</li> <li>Notices in the Agri-food e-bulletin ahead of each HWG meeting, confirming the date and topics of discussion.</li> <li>Invitations for stakeholder feedback on the outputs of the HWG at appropriate intervals, including dedicated sessions at FDTP governance group meetings, attendance at industry and civil society forums and HWG-led webinars.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

*Discussion*

- Members asked whether a 'level playing field' could be reached with voluntary reporting. FDTP team noted the pressures that the food system is facing, the need to design health metrics which were attractive for businesses, and learnings from other voluntary policies.
- Members asked whether the health metrics will consider the sustainability of products. SB explained that the HWG will initially work to develop metrics that incentivise and more effectively measure progress towards improving the healthiness of food. DK further explained that the FDTP is a joint programme and will work holistically to achieve consistent programme outputs.

Eco Working Group

- Judith Batchelar (JB) spoke about the plans for the next Design Partnership Group (DPG) meeting which will include a deep dive into eco proposals.
- JB explained that the Eco and Data WGs are considering existing work, addressing issues identified and discussing solutions to these. The Eco WG will bring these solutions to issues to future DPG meetings for input from members.
- JB presented the slides on 'Data issues and challenges for the eco workstream of the FDTP' in preparation for the discussion session planned next in the agenda.

Data Working Group

- Julie Pierce (JP) announced that the membership for the Data WG has been selected and they have met twice. There are nine members, chosen on the basis of their technical skills and experience with data, as well as their ability to represent all the supply chain stages and facets of the food industry.
- JP spoke more about what was covered at these meetings. At the first meeting, the ways of working, terms of reference, and initial next steps were established. The second meeting focused on reviewing the initial outputs from the Eco WG and what the data challenges will be for Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reporting. In addition, the priority needs that the Data WG will focus on were identified, including governance, confidentiality and movement of activity data across the supply chain.
- JP discussed the principles that will inform recommendations the Data WG will develop and includes:
  - avoiding 'lock-in' so that anyone who participates in the scheme isn't beholden to a single commercial supplier.
  - sharing respected industry standards/codes of best practice.
  - making any data proposals future proof, so they are fit both for current purposes and for potential future asks made of business about what and how data is reported. For example, the Department for Business mandates Scope 3 GHG emission reporting in company accounts for large businesses in all industries.
- JP discussed the future work of the Data WG, and will make use of existing knowledge and expertise, to learn from industry as well as other relevant parts of government, such as The Office for National Statistics.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JP noted some work the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is undertaking with Quadram, the food research institute, on a case study looking at current movement of data within the dairy sector, which is expected to start in August 2023.</li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member noted that we should understand what we want to use the data for, otherwise there is a risk of building systems that do not meet the exact requirements. DK explained that the first step is to understand what the methodology is for Scope 3 reporting. JP added that the FDTP will be mindful of potential use cases, different actors, types of actors and types of uses.</li> <li>• A member noted that it feels like the Eco WG is focused on the right things.</li> </ul>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Discussion session in breakout rooms</b></p> <p>Members had a rich discussion and provided helpful input into the range of different and shared data challenges across sectors and businesses.</p> <p>The key points raised and shared by the majority of groups included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data capability, awareness and skills</b> – There is a need for increased understanding of carbon measurements across the whole business/supply chain, as well as other users of the data.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, many companies outsource GHG calculations and may not understand the full methodology and assumptions behind the outputs. Therefore, it may be harder for companies to understand what the data demonstrates and what it can be used for.</li> <li>○ Capability varies across and within different sized organisations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Consistency of data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>International consistency</b> - International supply chains are a challenge due to different levels of awareness and interest globally. Some countries have limited data that they are able or willing to share. One member from a multi-national company commented that they do global reporting already but breaking it down to country specific is challenging.</li> <li>○ <b>Consistency of farm data</b> - Complexity of farms as biological systems, alongside the large variability in farming production systems means it's difficult to measure accurately and consistently.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Important to reduce burden on producers</b> – e.g. for farm producers that supply into multiple retailers, if the retailers have different asks about the type of data they want it could cause problems (including different retailer asks from across Europe).</li> <li>• One breakout room discussed standardising what is being asked for across the supply chain it makes it easier for farmers and other suppliers by having a single ask rather than lots of different asks.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- These challenges with on-farm data collection make it more difficult for companies to use primary data to inform their scope 3. It can also be a challenge for companies to obtain farm data from their suppliers.
  - **Need for alignment across UK.**
- **Availability of data in supply chain** – Limited availability of data from suppliers, which forms the large proportion of scope 3 emissions.
  - There needs to be a flow of data up and down the supply chain. Often the asks for data (including about scope 3) are only upstream. However, if you are in the middle of the supply chain you will need to ask both ways.
- **Reporting burden** - Due to the time lag when measuring carbon, the data can be out of date by the time a report is shared with the company.
  - A member mentioned that there needs to be flexibility, for example if there needs to be a substitution of ingredients to adapt to changes mid-year.
  - Reporting pressure towards the end of the year can be a burden.
  - One breakout room discussed a suggestion for a centralised data repository for companies to share their Scope 1 and 2 data throughout the year. This is because one businesses' Scope 1 and 2 can contribute to another's Scope 3 emissions. They noted there will be challenges to avoid mis-categorisation of businesses and resulting double counting.
- **Data specificity, data use and resource requirements.** Recognition that you do not need highly specific/accurate data to identify emissions hotspots but do need highly specific data to demonstrate reduced emissions from more sustainable practices.
  - Different members echoed the point that actual (primary) data is needed to incentivise suppliers to change and for organisations to focus and reduce emissions. Just using standard emissions factors can drive category switching but will not incentivise sustainable production practices.
  - One member shared that their organisation had already set FLAG targets (forest, land and agriculture science-based long-term targets), which have meant that they've had additional challenges in finding emissions factors that produce the right level of granularity for these targets.

Additional points raised included:

- **Incentives for data collection and sharing** should be considered to improve data accuracy and quality, especially for farmers.
- **Quality of data** – currently there is a reliance on proxy data, historical data, emissions factor databases.
- **Data assurance and validation** – important to validate the source of the data and understand who provides the data and where does it come from.
  - Assurance and verification are very resource intensive. A member suggested that it would be important to understand where these processes take place across the supply chain and to ensure the cost is spread evenly across the supply chain.
- **Cost and resource burden of calculating Scope 3** – Currently the cost of measuring Scope 3 is high and therefore businesses need to justify this within their organisations.

	<p>Therefore, SMEs may not be able to do this in the short term. It will be important for larger businesses to help smaller businesses e.g. with carbon literacy and data capabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emissions factors</b> – A member noted that emissions factor challenges will be the biggest issue to address, and that their business has steered away from publishing Scope 3 because of these challenges.</li> <li>• <b>Alignment with existing work, schemes and business decisions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members flagged the importance of linking-up with ongoing other initiatives as well as international standards (e.g. EU)</li> <li>○ Some businesses have already chosen options to measure emissions, some of these commercial. A member raised the question: how do we capture data that doesn't break contracts and is aware of commercial interests?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CT informed members that the DPG Terms of Reference will be updated to reflect recent ministerial steers.</li> <li>• CT explained that a Defra SharePoint folder has been created for DPG members to access DPG papers and relevant information, including the DPG Terms of Reference. All members should have received an email providing access to the SharePoint folder. Please refer to the SharePoint rules of use when accessing this folder. Please contact Defra Secretariat at the email address below if a member does not have access.</li> <li>• The next meeting is planned to be held in the Autumn and will be a deep dive into some of the proposals and considerations.</li> </ul>

Please direct further questions or feedback to [FoodDataTransparencyPartnership@defra.gov.uk](mailto:FoodDataTransparencyPartnership@defra.gov.uk)