



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 11 October 2023
Time 10:00-11:30
Venue Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Co-Chairs:

Sally Randall Director General, Food, Biosecurity and Trade, Defra
Chris Tyas Food Industry Advisor to Defra

Industry

Thirty-eight industry leaders in attendance

Speakers:

Karen Lepper Deputy Director of Food Data, Standards & Sustainability, Defra
Susan Barratt Health Working Group co-chair, and Non-Executive and former IGD CEO
Rebecca Lawrence Head of Food Industry Policy, Data Partnership & Engagement, DHSC
Anne Godfrey Data and Technical Working Group co-chair, and CEO, GS1
Julie Pierce Data and Technical Working Group co-chair, and Director of Information and Science, Food Standards Agency
Mark Little Director of Health and Sustainability Programmes, IGD

Apologies

Natasha Burgon Director for Diet, Obesity and Healthy Behaviours, DHSC, and Co-chair of Health Working Group

Item	Description and Actions
1.	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Tyas welcomed all to the meeting and thanked the group for their valuable participation during and between meetings. Chris welcomed Sally Randall, who introduced herself as the new co-chair and interim Director General, Food, Biosecurity and Trade, Defra replacing David Kennedy.
2.	<p>General and working group updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GOV.UK page for the FDTP programme is now live, and can be found here. Members should also have received access to a SharePoint folder that contain documents from meetings and work group papers, background documents, and the rules of use for the SharePoint. <p><u>Health Working Group</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first Health Working Group (HWG) meeting took place on 21 July. At this meeting, members agreed the group's terms of reference and approach to the workplan. The HWG workplan will remain live and subject to change as required. The HWG terms of reference and membership list can be found on the FDTP GOV.UK page. The second HWG meeting took place on 18 September. Jonathan Marron, the Director General for The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, attended on behalf of Natasha Burgon. At this meeting, members discussed the existing disclosure landscape and challenges different sectors face. Members also discussed a draft criteria for objectively shortlisting the health metrics and held its first conversation on potential health metric options. Whilst no decisions have been made on what the health metrics might be, discussions broadly covered three themes: 1. composite scores, 2. individual nutrients and 3. other i.e. fruit & veg. The third HWG meeting is planned for Friday 1 December. DHSC is running a structured programme of engagement, with wider industry, NGOs, and investors, to gather input into a long list of metric options ahead of the third HWG meeting in December. This includes an Industry Consult Group meeting on 9 November. <p><u>Eco Working Group</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco WG has continued to meet regularly over the summer and had two meetings in September which covered eco-labelling and some potential ideas for how we tackle many of the issues raised in our previous DPG meeting on eco data. Defra has also created a new task and finish group which is going to be looking at how we improve the consistency, quality and accessibility of eco food data. We were pleased to have had so much interest in that work and high-quality applications. Defra is engaging with the Food and Drink Sector Council and Ministers on the potential to publish a roadmap of the work on company reporting and data to share our findings to date more widely. <p><u>Data Working Group</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next Data working group meeting will follow DPG, taking place on 13th October. The meeting will focus on plans for case studies to be undertaken, including one on the dairy sector with Quadram Institute and Dairy UK. The dairy case study will consider the

	<p>supply chain of bottled milk from farm through to processing and point of sale via retail or hospitality. There will be further discussions on potential options for case studies, including a case study looking at composite products such as ready meals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the group’s focus is currently on the eco workstream, the Data working group continues to collaborate with DHSC on the health workstream in preparation for more substantive data input in the new year.
<p>3.</p>	<p>Discussion session in breakout rooms</p> <p>Defra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Lepper introduced the breakout discussion on eco-labelling. Karen noted the DPG is one part of a wide programme of stakeholder engagement, and that we’re still in the early stages of policy development. More detail can be found in the pre-read for this discussion. Karen then passed to Mark Little from IGD, whose work is independent of Defra and is one of a number of sources of input into Defra’s work. <p>IGD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark explained IGD’s been working on eco-labelling since 2021, where they have been developing a science-led set of recommendations for harmonised labelling aiming to help consumers make sustainable choices and reward businesses for supply chain efficiencies. • IGD have been stress testing draft proposals with real life data before they share the evidence gathered and final recommendations by the end of the year. • The key challenges IGD have identified are around what quality of data is sufficient to present to consumers, balancing consumer and supply chain behavior change, and a governance framework that can police the system while allowing changes as science evolves. <p>Group Discussion Summaries</p> <p>The below is a thematic summary of the discussions across all 5 breakout groups:</p> <p><u>Consumers</u></p> <p>Education of consumers will be critical to the success of eco-labelling. Consumers must understand what the ratings mean and be able to trust them, which will require an education campaign. There is a lot to learn from the development of nutritional labelling in this regard. Unlike nutritional data however, references to what is good and bad are more challenging to decide. Finally, there needs to be careful consideration to avoid a situation where consumers are confronted with a huge array of labels, while recognising the importance of avoiding a situation where eco-labels encourage negative behaviours such as lesser animal welfare standards.</p> <p><u>International compatibility</u></p> <p>The methodology must translate to systems used in all countries of the UK, as well as the EU and the USA, and this is important to both importers and exporters. Without this compatibility,</p>

	<p>opting into an England only eco-label will cause businesses and consumers headaches in other markets and so there will be limited uptake.</p> <p><u>Retail settings</u></p> <p>The approach taken must be adaptable to the various points of choice to consumers, from shelves to menus to online platforms. Green claims are already made in all of these environments, so it is necessary to work on all fronts.</p> <p>Data</p> <p>Data needs to be reliable and of sufficient quality before it can be presented to consumers. However, it must also be data that can be collected across all stages of global supply chains and kept live inexpensively, including where sourcing of inputs can change frequently. Linked to the above, the data required should be aligned internationally to simplify collection requirements. There are challenges to consider around the weighting of differing environmental impacts, e.g. water use and GHG emissions.</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>It is important to establish who will be responsible for governing this system, and how it will be governed. An adaptable system will be important as availability of data improves. There must be accountability and verification of labels.</p> <p><u>Business incentives</u></p> <p>Effective incentives need to be in place for businesses to adopt eco-labels more widely and improve supply chain sustainability. Businesses need to be able to demonstrate differentiation between themselves to compete on this metric, which is what will drive uptake, and differentiation will be reduced if secondary data or averages are used. Further, if national or other broad averages are used there will be little incentive for businesses to improve their processes under the scheme. Similarly, if there is little scope for improvement in the ratings, then there will be insufficient motivation for businesses to look for improvements. A mandatory methodology will need to enable fair comparisons within product categories and allow businesses to demonstrate improvements in their product environmental impacts.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please share any additional points you wish to raise with Chris, Sally, and the FDTP team.

Please direct further questions or feedback to FoodDataTransparencyPartnership@defra.gov.uk