

# 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** 6 March 2024  
**Time** 14:30-15:30  
**Venue** Microsoft Teams

### Attendance

#### Co-Chairs:

Sally Randall Director General, Food, Biosecurity and Trade, Defra  
Chris Tyas Non-executive board member, Defra & Chair, GS1UK

### Industry

33 industry leaders in attendance

### Speakers:

Judith Batchelar Eco Working Group co-chair - Deputy Chair, Environment Agency  
Natasha Burgon Co-chair of Health Working Group - Director for Health Improvement, Global and Public Health Group, DHSC  
Anne Godfrey Data and Technical Working Group co-chair - CEO, GS1  
Julie Pierce Data and Technical Working Group co-chair - Director of Information and Science, Food Standards Agency

### Apologies

Susan Barratt Health Working Group co-chair - Non-Executive and former IGD CEO  
Karen Lepper Eco Working Group co-chair - Deputy Director for Food Data, Standards and Sustainability, Defra

Item	Description and Actions
1.	<p data-bbox="225 237 616 275"><b><u>Welcome and introductions</u></b></p> <ul data-bbox="272 297 1449 790" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="272 297 1449 409">• Co-chair Chris Tyas welcomed members to the first DPG meeting of 2024 following a hiatus over the Christmas period. Chris then set out the agenda for today, largely focussed on updates from the working groups.</li> <li data-bbox="272 432 1449 589">• The key objective for the meeting was to ask DPG members to take on a special role from now on to share and socialise key messages on the progress made in the working groups within their own organisations. The hope is that when the roadmap is published in the coming weeks, industry is already familiar with the content.</li> <li data-bbox="272 611 1449 790">• Co-chair Sally Randall gave an update on ministerial priorities. Food is at the centre of political dialogue at the moment, demonstrated by the Prime Minister attending the NFU conference. The Prime Minister has been clear that he is focussed on consumers, food security, and the farming sector, such as through the announcement of the new Food security index.</li> </ul>
2.	<p data-bbox="225 815 568 853"><b><u>Working Group Updates</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="225 875 767 913"><b>Eco Working Group – Judith Batchelar</b></p> <ul data-bbox="272 913 1449 2024" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="272 913 1449 987">• Members will be aware there has been a delay in the publication of the FDTP eco roadmap.</li> <li data-bbox="272 999 1449 1099">• This delay is due to competing demands with other priorities, however we intend to share an embargoed copy with DPG members for feedback on showstoppers and hope to publish the roadmap shortly.</li> <li data-bbox="272 1111 1449 1503">• The document covers the priorities for the eco working group for the months and years ahead, including: <ul data-bbox="368 1200 1449 1503" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="368 1200 1449 1301">○ Standardising/harmonising the measurement and communication of environmental impact data underpinning scope 3 company reporting, product-level footprinting, carbon calculators, and eco-labelling.</li> <li data-bbox="368 1301 1449 1368">○ Improving the accuracy, consistency and accessibility of environmental impact data.</li> <li data-bbox="368 1368 1449 1435">○ Building capacity within the food &amp; drink industry to deliver environmental data solutions (e.g. measurement and reporting), with consideration for SMEs.</li> <li data-bbox="368 1435 1449 1503">○ Working across Defra to support farmers on making best use of environmental data to help inform changes in farm practices and access to green finance.</li> </ul> </li> <li data-bbox="272 1514 1449 1827">• On ecolabelling, the feedback and evidence we have so far has shown two fundamental challenges we need to tackle to enable a standardised approach to eco-labels. The first is a lack of consensus on how to fairly and accurately quantify product level environmental impacts. The second is the insufficient availability and quality of data used to inform these assessments. Therefore, we are currently focusing on tackling these two challenges, as they are critical to achieving our goal to reduce the potential for misleading or false environmental claims to consumers. Policy work on the methodology for a voluntary ecolabel has slowed, however we'll keep researching and a watching brief on developments elsewhere.</li> <li data-bbox="272 1839 1449 1939">• Judith referenced recent research on the harmonisation of carbon accounting tools for agriculture that has been misrepresented in some circles. You can find a summary of the research on this link <a href="https://science.defra.gov.uk">Science Search (defra.gov.uk)</a>.</li> <li data-bbox="272 1951 1449 2024">• Judith also wanted to bring the Taskforce for Nature based Financial Disclosures (TNFD) consultation to member's attention. TNFD is a framework for companies to</li> </ul>

assess, disclose and manage nature-related risks and impacts. There is no requirement in policy or legislation to report on nature, but some “early adopters” are trialling it for their businesses to understand what is involved. In the UK, the Green Finance Institute are running sector-specific workshops on TNFD capacity building and there is a consultation running now until the end of March on sector guidance for food and drink [here](#).

#### Next Steps

- On the 18 March members of the Eco and Data working groups will hear the outputs of a Defra funded study by WRAP and Hestia to improve the availability of high-quality environmental impact data for key food commodities and multi-ingredient foods relevant to UK consumption.
- On 25th March, the Eco and Data Working Groups will have a joint workshop to ensure a shared understanding of work done so far, and to discuss important “gaps” in relation to data infrastructure work. In particular, the groups will help identify next steps on issues around data formats and access to datasets.

#### Questions

- A member asked how the change of focus on eco-labelling impacts IGD’s work. IGD were asked to research eco-labels by industry, and their work is independent of government policy. IGD’s work has several aspects, such as trialling labels with consumers as well as working out the methodology and data requirements that could underpin eco-labels. These strands can be explored simultaneously, and proposed trials on labelling do not require a finalised methodology. In discussions with IGD we have been clear that proceeding with insufficient data could be counterproductive.

### **Data Working Group – Julie Pierce**

#### Achievements

- We held a Data Working Group meeting on 12th February. This looked at governance for a future operating model, with a focus on eco. Specifically:
- The role of governance in the wider programme and the problem statement it was seeking to address.
- Data governance: the rules and processes for the handling on individual pieces of data.
- System governance: the rules and institutional set up governing the wider system, such as whether there are single providers and the funding and quality control mechanisms for shared services.
- Discussions included legal frameworks needed to enable secure data sharing and governance, models of regulation of the data sharing system (particularly self-regulation), and incentives and barriers to data sharing. We also valued the opportunity to join the health working group on their metrics discussion.
- Our work on use cases, covered in the previous update, also continues. We will be finalising the work on the dairy use case in the coming weeks. With thanks to various partners, we have managed to make additional contacts with key users in the supply chain, particularly dairy companies and milk recorders, and are making additional outreaches to farming groups via Defra and the NFU.

Next Steps

- Joint Eco-Data Working Group meeting – see Eco update.

Timelines

- 25<sup>th</sup> March – Joint Eco & Data WG workshop
- March/April - completion of the dairy Use Case

**Health Working Group – Natasha Burgon**

Achievements

- The FDTP health strand is included in the Major Conditions Strategy, focusing on the six major conditions that account for around 60% of ill-health and early death in England - many of which are related to obesity. The FDTP health strand is an important part of government’s strategy to address poor diet and reduce obesity.
- A fourth HWG face-to-face meeting was held on 29 February 2024, with 13 out of 15 members attending. Data Working Group Secretariat joined the meeting to understand potential data challenges and support businesses may require. At this meeting, HWG members streamlined metric options, removing metrics considered not workable with a clear justification for removing. Initial discussions on product categories were also discussed.

Engagements

- A second NGO workshop and Investor engagement is planned to take place in March, to feed in views to HWG meeting 5.
- Wider industry engagement is to continue via HWG members and the different industry groups they participate to, the Design Partnership Group and Food and Drink Sector Council. In addition, regular bilateral meetings are planned with trade associations and DHSC to ensure alignment with other policy areas, including the HFSS regulations and the reduction and reformulation programme.
- The HWG Secretariat are planning to meet with the Devolved Administrations mid-March to provide an update on progress made by the HWG.

Next Steps and Timelines

- The next HWG meetings are planned for the end of April, early June and early July. The aim of the next meeting is to further whittle down a longlist of possible metrics, taking on board member’s business testing and wider stakeholder feedback. Summaries of HWG meetings 1-3 are available on the [FDTP’s gov.uk webpage](https://fdtp.gov.uk). HWG meeting summary 4 is planned to be published in the coming weeks.

Questions

- A DPG member raised a concern regarding the challenge the health strand faces in achieving stakeholder agreement on the health metrics that companies will be asked to voluntarily report against, due to some NGOs proposing their own health targets. Natasha explained that propositions from stakeholders can help generate momentum for the health strand. Natasha reminded members that the HWG aims to coalesce around an agreed set of metrics, focusing on a common methodology, that will then form the advice and recommendations to DHSC ministers, including feedback from wider stakeholders. Natasha further explained that this is the first step before moving onto the next phase of work.

3.	<p><b><u>Key Messages Pack</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working groups have made significant progress and we want to improve how this progress is communicated. We ask that DPG members share the progress within their own organisations so that people feel involved in the process, information we later publish is not new to them, and other parts of your organisations have had opportunity to comment.</li> <li>• Communication of progress is key to securing industry buy in to help us achieve our deliverables, and the key messages packs should help you in this.</li> <li>• We are also increasing external engagement on the programme and have several stakeholder events lined up, these including Retail Week Live, Connect Farming, and the Westminster Food and Nutrition Forum.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Questions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member queried how, given an upcoming focus on more granular data, the group will ensure it follows competition and fairness guidelines. Chris assured members this topic would be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting.</li> <li>• Another member raised that data collection is a charged issue with many groups involved, and that the policy in devolved nations is to collect data through farming schemes. The member questioned whether it is within the remit of the eco working group to push for government to do similar in England. There are many options for data collection, such as the work WRAP and Hestia will share this month, and while other organisations are involved the eco working group should consider the best way for government to intervene. The FDTP have and will continue engaging with devolved governments on data collection and data governance.</li> <li>• A member also asked about how our eco-labelling work aligns with the EU, given many businesses work across the EU and need a simple universal system. The FDTP engage with EU colleagues regularly and track progress on policy development, and see developing a system that works for all as a long term project.</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretariat to share key messages within 48 hours. Defra team to share roadmap at later point.</li> <li>• Please share any questions you wish to raise with Chris, Sally, and the FDTP team.</li> <li>• Details for the next meeting of the DPG will be shared in due course.</li> </ul>