# Food Data Transparency Partnership
## Eco working group and Data working group joint workshop minutes

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| **Date** | 25 March 2024 |
| **Time** | 14:15-17:15 |
| **Venue** | 2 Marsham Street / 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
Anne Godfrey          CEO, GS1 UK
Julie Pierce          Director of Information and Science, Food Standards Agency

**Sixteen Eco working group members, four Data working group members, and ten Eco Data Sources task and finish group members in attendance**

FDTP team (Defra and FSA)

*The Eco and Data working groups are stakeholder engagement groups that provide input on policy development as part of an open policy design process. These discussions do not reflect agreed government policy.*

1. <u>**Welcome and introductions:**</u>

- Julie Pierce (JP) welcomed attendees to the meeting.
  - JP recapped Chatham House Rules and stressed that the meeting would be conducted in a competition compliant manner.
  - JP introduced Mark Gillott, GS1's Standards and Solutions Director, who will be facilitating some of the meeting discussion.

- JP set out the agenda:
  - In session 1 we want to ensure we have a shared understanding, both on what FDTP is working on, and what we mean by "data infrastructure".
  - After a 10-minute break, we will split into two breakout groups for focused discussion on "data interoperability" and "access to data".
  - After another 10-minute break we will rejoin for collective discussion and feedback.

Roles of the FDTP and the WGs:

- Karen Lepper (KL) highlighted that the FDTP is aware of and working with a large range of external initiatives. *A table of initiatives was shown on the presentation slides*.

**Action:** Please let the FDTP team know if there are any important external initiatives missing from this diagram.

- KL noted Working Group members' input is invaluable for the FDTP's policy development.
- While we're co-designing solutions, government policy is still subject to Ministerial approval.

2. **FDTP Eco updates and priorities:**

- Judith Batchelar (JB) noted that the FDTP's Roadmap Paper was due to be published in late April or early May.

- JB noted several important updates on FDTP's priorities:
    - **Eco-labelling:** We have decided to focus the next phase of work on improving the availability and quality of data and agreeing a standardised product level calculation method. We are therefore no longer planning to bring forward a consultation in 2024 on eco-labelling.
    - **Farm carbon audits:** A big part of improving this data is going to come from improving the quantity and quality of primary data from farms. The Defra team have already made a great start on this, investigating options for increasing the uptake of farm carbon audits and harmonising carbon calculator tool methodologies to increase trust in, and comparability of, their outputs.
- JB noted the FDTP's other key priorities. Several co-current workstreams to deliver improvements across eco-labelling, carbon audits and supply chain data.
- JB noted today's workshop would focus on priorities around data infrastructure.

- JB noted Defra's **new R&D project** – "Long-term Improvements to Environmental Impact Data for Food" (LED4Food).
- This research was procured via Defra's RDE framework and awarded to a consortium led by WRAP, and including Oxford University, WWF, Rothamsted Research, Scotland's Rural College, and others.
- The project will focus on:
    - How to facilitate long-term improvements in UK environmental impact data for food.
    - Filling in evidence gaps identified by FDTP's working groups and the Eco Data Sources Task and Finish group.

- This project will build on the research recently completed by WRAP and Hestia to improve the availability of high-quality environmental impact data for key food commodities, findings from which were presented to C2030 members on the 18th March.
- FDTP officials confirmed they would share more details on this project with members.
- Please see Breakout Group 2 notes below on how WRAP intends to engage with FDTP's working groups on this R&D project.

### 3. Eco Data Sources task & finish group outputs:

- KL introduced the group:
  - The Eco Data Sources Task and Finish (T&F) Group was set up to progress thinking and develop recommendations around improvements to the accuracy, consistency, and accessibility of "eco data sources".
  - Some members of the T&F group will share the group's three main recommendations, following their discussions over the last few months.

### a) Data quality framework:

A member of the T&F group presented on their recommendation for a data quality framework.

Background:
- It is currently difficult to get good quality environmental impact data for any industry, but especially food, where production is dependent on multiple variables. E.g. weather, seasons, inputs, disasters, diseases.
- A single emission factor cannot capture the whole impact of a food product or activity.
- However, you can check how well that emission factor represents what it is trying to estimate.
- The Task & Finish group is **not** providing guidance on how to *improve* the data quality – instead highlighting the importance of creating a framework to measure the quality of data.
- This would give users more trust in the data, and the ability to select better quality datapoints, for scope 3 reporting or product-level assessments, as well as any sustainability-related decision-making.

Recommendations:
- The T&F group recommends developing **a data quality framework (DQF).**
- This would enable consistent reporting on the quality or certainty of any emission factors.
- Example frameworks include the GHG Protocol and the WRAP scope 3 protocols. Both use similar structure and metrics.

Further considerations identified:
- Who should be responsible for the delivery of a DQF and its future governance. Additionally, how would its use be incentivised?
- Should there be minimum thresholds for data quality, and how these differ for different use cases (e.g. eco-labelling).
- Further research is required into what type of framework should be introduced, how it should be introduced, and how this would cut across different product categories.

### b) Primary data integration:

A member of the T&F group presented on their recommendations around primary data integration.

Background:
- Secondary data is important when an organisation can't get or collect primary data from its supply chain.
- However, this data can sometimes be too low quality for the intended uses. Organisations may avoid secondary data because it does not match their supply chain or is too old.
- We discussed how secondary data could be made more useful for businesses, giving more accurate comparisons between products, and especially, between different production systems of those products.
- In future, we will need more data to show system changes over time.

- To keep improving secondary datasets, primary data must be integrated regularly. This data must be high quality, collected at higher temporal and spatial scale than now, and reported in a detailed way that allows good aggregation into secondary datasets.
- Defra's work on carbon audits will increase the quantity and quality of primary data, so can help facilitate this.

Recommendations:
- Set rules for data ownership and privacy to encourage data sharing and protect data holders in the food system.
- Standardised framework for collecting and transferring activity and impact data. This would include data interoperability rules, that "label" or "tag" the data so data could be flexibly aggregated into different production systems if needed.
- We need to know how to aggregate primary data into secondary datasets. Possibly requires guidance set by Defra.
- We need to know how to get to "impact data" from "activity data", again possibly with guidance from Defra. This could include endorsed methodologies for scope 3 or product-level analysis.
- We should think about having an independent reviewer verify and validate primary data before it can it be aggregated into secondary datasets.

Further considerations identified:
- Need to determine data ownership – can data be owned by the primary data holders, or does it need to be transferred to a third-party?
- How can primary producers be encouraged to collect and share their data into secondary datasets?
- What infrastructure is required to enable primary data to be shared at scale consistently?

## c) **Open-access database:**
A member of the T&F group presented on their recommendation for an open-access database.

Background:
- Businesses that want to measure, report, or improve on environmental impact currently need to coordinate and standardise data points from a large range of sources.
- This is complex, costly, and time-consuming for businesses.

Recommendations:
- The group recommends the creation of an open-access database that aggregates, stores and shares reliable emission factors, covering both UK-sourced and imported goods.
- This could be a "lead" database, which collects data from a verified group of subsidiary data sources - such as industry aggregated sources, national inventories, and academic literature.
- Data in the "lead" database should be standardised to create average emission factors that can be used by anyone across the food supply chain.

Further considerations identified:
- Governance – who would govern this database? Should or could it be Defra or another third party?
- Should there be strict regulation of the database, like enforcing use of this database over others by the food and drink industry? If not, how can we encourage buy-in and take-up, so that there's much greater consistency in the data used across the industry?

- What level of granularity is required? This must be balanced with anonymity / data privacy principles.

## 4. <u>Session 1 Discussion:</u>

<u>General:</u>
- One member commented that many considerations would depend on the size of supply chains. For example, accessibility of data is particularly poor for larger supply chains.
- Another member flagged the GHG inventory and the need to ensure there is a feedback loop, especially for baselining/benchmarking and changing the behaviour of farmers and consumers. Need to consider both flexibility and functionality for this.

<u>Open access database:</u>
- One member said they were **cautious on open-access database** recommendation, noting it would likely be very costly. They also noted that international projects were attempting something similar, so these should be explored first.
- Another member noted that anything centrally controlled would need a clear framework with boundaries, to ensure competition would be possible in at least some sections of the system.
- Another member said there needs to be thought on where a competitive environment is a good thing, and where it is not. Unnecessary to create massive duplication of work if it adds no value.
- Another member said businesses would benefit from access to secondary data, but would also want to access their own primary data for calculating LCAs. Data interoperability would be key for this.

<u>Data quality framework:</u>
- One member noted that ideas around a data quality framework had been debated for several years. They argued that a decision should be made soon so that progress isn't slowed down.
- Another member commented that a data methodology would need to be defined before data quality could be considered.

*Attendees split into two breakout groups.*

## 5. <u>Breakout Group 1 (Data Interoperability):</u>

- JB emphasised the importance of data interoperability, in order to:
  - o Enable greater exchange of data across the agri-food system.
  - o Increase availability of environmental impact data by facilitating consolidation and harmonisation of data from various sources into large datasets.
  - o Help primary producers share one set of data with different supply chain customers.

### a) <u>Group 1, Presentation 1 – PACT (Partnership for Carbon Transparency):</u>

Beth Hadley presented on behalf of PACT, on their work to develop a global standard for calculating and exchanging scope 3 emissions data.

- PACT is powered by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).
- Their calculation method has so far been endorsed by over 50 corporations, with over 25 technical providers engaged in standardisation for data exchange.
- Covers PCF (Product Carbon Footprint) data.

- PACT could be extended to cover the exchange of additional impact categories or industry-specific information, via a data model extension.

- PACT's **Pathfinder Framework** is an industry-agnostic emissions accounting methodology.
- PACT's Pathfinder Network's approach includes:
  - Common technical language.
  - Specification of data format (attributes that need to be calculated and shared).
  - Data exchange API – enables interoperability across systems.
  - Open to all organisations – peer to peer exchange.
- The Network is supported by PACT's Technical Specifications.

- PACT's **Pathfinder Network** is designed to give **data sovereignty** to users.
  - No membership or barriers as it uses an API instead of a platform.
  - Each node in network has full ownership and control over their own data. Users can choose to connect nodes to facilitate data exchange via peer-to-peer authentication.
  - This approach is particularly important for global supply chains, as data is subject to the laws and governance of the country in which it is located.

- Concept of **data model extensions** – allows organisations to implement technical modifications specific to their business / industry.
- PACT does not "deep-dive" into industries but does collaborate with sector-specific initiatives to support the creation of methodologies specific in that industry. That said, WBCSD works closely with Agri-food business through their Agriculture & Food pathway. FDTP is the leading initiative PACT knows of in this space.

- Conformance testing began a year ago. Currently 26 conformant solutions across 12 countries, ranging from small startups to multi-nationals.
- Have learned that if the data format is accessible and open, the full range of organizations can join / adopt.

Discussion during presentation 1:
- Members asked for more information on data sovereignty and whether PACT was working with agri-food businesses – answers to these questions have been incorporated into the above presentation notes.
- One member noted their approval of a standard API. They stated this would not conflict with harmonisation of carbon calculator methodology.
- One member said the data format should include copyright information – allow people to specify what data they are not willing to be copied or shared, and what data requires attribution.

- PACT noted they had received feedback to include license/usage rights within data format or within authentication flow. Noted that many organisations only share PCF data with customers subject to a contract / NDA.

**b) Group 1, Presentation 2 – WRAP / HESTIA:**

Matt Anderson-Barker (WRAP) and Joseph Poore (HESTIA) presented on their proposal for a centralised data format.

- One of WRAP's roles is to be an **industry convener**, to ensure solutions from R&D project they are completing on behalf of Defra is relevant to members of the FDTP working groups and industry as a whole.
- WRAP **will seek feedback from FDTP** working groups throughout the LED4Food project, particularly at quarterly "touch points". Feedback and input from Eco WG members is welcomed throughout the project.

- The proposal for a centralised data format discusses why a **standard data format** will help with data transparency. In particular, it would help harmonise primary data and facilitate flow into and interoperability with secondary data.

- **Significant amount of data** can be found in published research reports / articles. Additionally, several large organisations have their own big datasets.
- The datasets are communicated in radically different ways, so the data is difficult to access / utilise.
- Harmonised data would increase knowledge exchange and scientific progress.
- Data could be used by farmers to help calculate their own emissions.
- Harmonised data would also increase knowledge exchange and scientific progress.

- A standard data format would help unlock this significant amount of data.
- Starting by trying to harmonise **research and government data**. However, will also need to consider:
    - farm environmental calculators
    - LCA databases (around 100 – all different levels of completeness).
    - supply chain data

- EU is funding millions into data harmonisation, particular for health data. Significant economic and political backing in European Commission's Data Act.

**c) Group 1 Discussion:**
- At the start of the discussion, several members **agreed on need for data format harmonisation**.
- At the end of the discussion, several members argued that a harmonised data format should be **mandated**.

Questions of clarification:

- Would the approach include **consolidating activity data**? Very helpful for re-baselining, updating models, and helping private companies access adequate detail. However, big additional step.
- Clarification needed over defining infrastructure to enable data quality, rather than to **consolidate all data** and own it in one space. Two members highlighted that centralisation of the standard is different to centralisation of the data itself, even if the former is a pre-requisite for the latter. For example, APIs could communicate data that is stored across different datasets, and this would be aided by a consistent data format.

- Joseph Poore and Matt Anderson-Barker responded to these points:

- o We are primarily focusing on a data format to **describe data consistently**. This includes activity data and impact assessment data. Farm carbon calculators would also use this format.
  - o LCA databases can **remain private** (activity data is their IP). However, they could share impact assessment data in a consistent format which could then be transparently represented, clear and interoperable.
  - o If we ensure vast amount of data is consistently represented it **would not necessitate the data to be shared / stored** centrally. How you use, apply, and share the data is a separate conversation.

- Two members raised the impact of **data granularity** on data consistency.
  - o Even if using a consistent system, if one LCA includes emissions from a tractor, and another does not, which one do you use? Questions around system boundaries.
  - o Data infrastructure must enable granular data. If a farmer switches to methane inhibitors this should be shown in the farmer's data. Also issue of product allocation.

- Joseph Poore explained several uses cases and pain points addressed by format harmonisation:
  - o **Farm carbon calculators** – improve comparability / transparency of calculators; enable data to be moved between tools (giving farmers greater flexibility); simplify data's usage up/down the supply chain; reduce cost of data collection.
  - o **Support tools moving data across supply chain** – greater transparency and consistent methods for data recalculation.
  - o **Eco-labelling** – build trust and transparency in the underlying data.
  - o **Government data** (e.g. national inventory).
  - o LCA databases.

**Action:** WRAP will seek the group's input in April / May on pain points around the current lack of centralised data format in the supply chain, to inform identification of use cases to explore further. Members are welcome to get in touch before.

Interactions with other areas:

- Several members highlighted the need to **consistently communicate** and **define terms**, especially as organisations use different terms / language:
  - o On "**data transparency**": "transparency" does not necessarily mean "accountability".
  - o On "**data harmonisation**": a harmonised data format is <u>not</u> the same as a centralised data repository. E.g. PACT uses peer-to-peer data exchange – format is harmonised but data is not centrally stored anywhere.
  - o Incorrect to say individuals (especially farmers) would be "giving" or "handing over" their data as this implies loss of ownership/sovereignty of the data and that it would be given for free.

- One member asked how this data format harmonisation would interact with Defra's recent ADAS report on harmonising farm carbon calculators.
  - o A member explained that a consistent data format could be used by carbon calculators, for example when running models to generate assessment.

- A member raised the importance of **increasing engagement with the agriculture community**, including bringing in expertise into the FDTP's working groups. Defra and FSA officials confirmed they would discuss this further as part of the review of current group membership.

- A member raised harmonisation with Environment Agency's **SEEBEYOND** project. Important to ensure the data format is harmonised across relevant initiatives.
- Another said there would need to be a gradual harmonisation process. **Several geographical areas to consider**: UK (including Devolved Administrations), UK + Republic of Ireland, Europe, and global.

- A member suggested **listing all the data points required** for LCAs. Additionally, identify what questions are being asked for farmers and all the way up the supply chain. This needs to be aggregated so that nothing is missing.

- A member highlighted that often the **cost of data sits with one actor, with benefits sitting with another**. Must be remedied – consider the ethical characteristics of data.
- Another member linked this to the role of **finance** for incentivising data collection. One enabler for this would be eco labelling, which France is looking to mandate.
- Another member added that involving finance was vital, and this requires a bigger conversation about **verification and assurance** of data to ensure data is a true reflection.

"How good is good enough":
- One member said we would need to be more **systematic in criteria for cost**. What needs to be done? What needs to be invested? Do we pursue a "non-perfect" option that is quicker to do? There is a need to be pragmatic about balancing cost, ease barriers to address and developing an approach that is fit for purpose.
- There was agreement that it would be important to define "how good is good enough" and then move towards this.
- Another member suggested it would **not be necessary to get everyone on board** with a data standard before it could be set – just having a subset of people starting to use it may be enough.
- A member agreed with this, saying that most voluntary standards are adopted this way. However, important to ensure the data standard can evolve quickly based on feedback. This way, there won't be any need to mandate the data format – market forces would encourage adoption.

6. **Breakout Group 2 (Access to Data):**

- KL highlighted the fundamental objectives of the FDTP to ease the burden on scope 3 reporting.
- Access to data remains a strong barrier.

a) **Group 2, Presentation 1 – GLFI:**

- Nick Major presented on behalf of [GFLI], on their work to develop a database for feed ingredient impacts using LCA methodology.

- The GFLI database, published in 2020, allows feed, livestock and aquaculture sectors to use data based on a harmonised methodology, and calculate the environmental footprint of products.
- Feed companies use the GFLI secondary dataset in their footprinting calculations, easing the burden on companies that are not expected to know specific details about their feed products.

- The GFLI database uses a wide range of sources, including industry data from several countries.

- Findings show that swapping raw materials in and out, but keeping the nutrient specifications the same, and optimising your carbon footprint, means you can reduce both costs and CO2.
- The database holds more than 1,800 datasets covering main ingredients for lots of different regions. It uses the EU PEF method, as well as a data quality rating (DQR) to assess the quality of data included in the dataset.
- The AIC (Agricultural Industries Confederation) has created a UK data sub-set, using data from the GFLI database.

- Uses of the data include: identifying feed formulation ingredients, LCA studies, sustainability reports, and identifying and communicating impact reduction.
- This usage depends on the user's licence: 1) Commercial license, 2) Developer license, 3) Research license.

- GFLI is a member organisation. It does not receive public funding and generates all revenue from membership – up until 6 months ago. The original database (an aggregated dataset) was free to access. It is currently paywalled to fund the development.
- The database is governed by: 1) Board of Directors, 2) Technical Management Committee, 3) Secretariat, 4) Scientific Advisory Council.

**b) Group 2, Presentation 2 – Quadram Institute:**

- Maria Traka (Quadram Institute) presented on the Composition of Foods Integrated Dataset (CoFID). CoFID is the UK's national food nutrient composition tables that looks at what is happening with the nutrient data over time, in foods reflecting what people are eating.

- There are more than 3,000 foods in this dataset – both individual ingredients and recipes (complex foods). The data format includes the internal food code, name of group description, and information about the amount of nutrients per 100g of food (among other indicators).
- They are looking to integrate branded food data and sustainability data.
- There is substantial metadata associated with CoFID.
- For the UK (and science/research/public health) to have value from this data, they are involved in harmonising across different countries. They use a data management system called FoodCase that annotates data with additional information e.g. links to lab results. This is important for interoperability of data with other countries.

- A simple version of this data is available through open access, as a downloadable spreadsheet on the DHSC government website.
- Data can be exported in many different formats – although this is not available in the open-access version, just for internal systems.
- The UK regulatory framework for labels requires some nutrient data to be presented in a different way to CoFID. The labelling dataset – using CoFID data converted to labelling values – has restricted access. Although it is provided free for SMEs.
- Consideration for connecting software providers in a more machine-readable way e.g. through APIs.
- Quadram Institute have worked across Europe and internationally to create standards, so they can all speak the same language e.g. FoodEx2 - a standardisation agreement that categorises foods and their parent/child relationship so different foods can be linked together.

- Sources of updated data include analytical surveys, collaboration with industry, Manufacturers and Trade Association data and label data, literature data.
- Uses of data include Industry, Researchers, Food & Health Professionals, Big Data, Public Health, Consumers.
- The dataset is funded by 1) Analytical surveys funded by OHID, BBSCRC, Industry (e.g. AHDB, Egg Council etc.) (although not at regular intervals as is necessary), 2) Data management and interoperability (FAIR data) by the BBSRC and external uplift funding.

## c) **Group 2 Discussion:**

Members were asked: which governance model would be most appropriate for access to data?

- Several members agreed that endorsement of a dataset/database would be needed. Other members suggested a mix of partial steering and endorsement, or legal requirements and endorsement.
  - One member said that, 1) There needs to be a degree of pragmatism to get people doing stuff, 2) It needs to be easy-to-use rather than a theoretical exercise, 3) Ensure innovation is already happening.
- One member identified the challenge of leaving it to an open market. Companies would choose the dataset which shows the best result for their product, leading to skewed / inconsistent outcomes. Partial steering was identified as likely to have a similar outcome.
- One member argued that we already have an open market for secondary data (e.g. GFLI), and partial steering has been done (e.g. GHG Protocol / ISO standards etc.). They said endorsement would allow for growth and development, rather than being an overly managed activity – as with legal requirement.
- One member said that consideration should be given to differentiation within product categories. If everyone's using the same data with the same results, do we lose the opportunity for variability. They asked if there should be different approaches to this question of endorsement or open market depending on the supply chain / product.
  - Another member agreed that there should be a sliding scale between the different governance options based on the amount of data you have and the accuracy of that data. Different food product categories might fall into different regulation set-ups. They should work through those phases.

Members were asked: how do we choose what to endorse – is it on the basis of standards? Is it the government's job?

- One member said there should be a mix of partial steering and endorsement. The legal route is hard unless you bring everyone with you. Encouraging collaboration between databases enables different ways of approaching a big problem.
- One member said that labelling is still going to be a big factor. A data quality score might have a different system for labelling vs scope 3, for example.
- One member said that there still needs to be scope for organisations to use primary data for a core product. Secondary data should be used where we don't have / need that.
  - One member referenced the Origin Green model in which around 85% of data is from secondary sources, whereas 15% of data is collected on-farm.
  - They highlighted the importance of consent of farmers / primary producers to share data.
  - Another member suggested the incentives might not be there for people who provide data in the first place. There is a broken market where demand is high and supply is low. There needs to be more money available for farmers to collect data in a standard-specific way.
    - Another member suggested that retailers are gaining the value, but primary producers are providing the data.

- o One member referenced the Seafish tool, which only asks fishermen once for their data.
- Thinking about incentivisation, one member identified that there's complete transparency on nutritional data legislation, removing blockers to providing the data. Carbon data is currently much more like commercial or private data which you don't have to report at the product level. If there were a mandate to provide that data, it could remove commercial concern around sharing data. If mandatory labelling were introduced, then that removes one of the blockers around provision of data.
- The same member said that it didn't need to be government endorsing something. A third party like WRAP/HESTIA could do it on behalf of Defra. It may be endorsed by government but run by a third party.

Members were asked: what does the point of access to data looked like?

- One member said that having a centralised dataset/database make it clear and easy to find the information. If there were a number of endorsed databases, it becomes sprawling and confusing.
- One member said that their organisation had done a lot of work looking at this issue and could see the utility of endorsing a data platform that is capable of harmonising lots of other people's data – without closing off the route to the other databases being used or harmonised. They identified a dual purpose:
  1) Challenge in different data sources being used, and divergent approaches in different parts of the sector. This is problematic at the point at which a range of products is being evaluated.
  2) There's a lot of innovation going on in this space but there's no centralised government intervention. France already has a national database of environmental impacts. A harmonisation platform could allow businesses in the UK to use data for free or charge internationally for use.

## 7. Collective Discussion:

*The breakout groups rejoined for collective discussion.*

### Summary of breakout group 1 (Data interoperability):

- Good communication, agreed definitions, terminology and shared language is vital to avoid misinterpretation.
- Food system is large and complex – need to consider all parts.
- Need to future-proof for continuous improvement (e.g. data granularity).
- Also need to future-proof standardised data for multiple data purposes. Predict purposes in advance and start working on them.
- Discussed prioritisation of use cases (e.g. need good data quality for reporting for financial purposes – if poor quality it will be an excuse not to do it).
- Will need consumer facing information to drive behaviour change.
- Need to consider both technical and human level to data governance.
- Balancing act of ensuring the approach is good enough to get going.

- WRAP explained touchpoints for members of the working groups to feed into the LED4Food R&D project.

**Summary of breakout group 2 (Access to data):**

- Balancing act of any standards – too rigid will be unworkable, and too loose will not achieve purpose.
- There was discussion about whether database(s) should be open or regulated.
- Group came down in favour of endorsing some data. Can look at regulations in future. Issue on who would do the endorsing. Government, or third party? No final decision on this.
- Group were interested in having a central data platform sitting above everything else, with other databases being able to feed in back and forth.
- Considerations for eco-labelling would need to be built in, but might need different data standards.
- Different food products (and their categories) are on different journeys – possible that some things can be endorsed soon, but others later when they have sufficient data quantity / quality.
- The lack of requirements for reporting is a bit of a blocker at the moment. Movements towards that will speed things up.

**Discussion:**

- A member asked what group 2 meant by a **central data platform** sitting above everything else.
  - We heard from GLFI and Quadram as case studies for different areas of data. Examples of how it can already work.
  - We discussed the idea that endorsement doesn't have to be specific to data sources. For example, a platform like HESTIA could harmonise various datasets without saying you can't use the source data.
  - No need for a central FDTP database – there are already existing databases performing a centralising function.
  - No perfect example exists, but we can still learn lessons from other industries and work out which systems / funding models should be replicated.

- A member pointed out that one end of the supply chain, near consumer, wants a "single truth", but further up the supply chain you get "multiple truths". Data can capture these multiple truths, but need to be careful as we move down the supply chain. For example, 100s breeds of sheep, with a diverse impact on environment.

- One member said it would be vital to consider why some farmers were cautious about sharing their data. For example, Red Tractor's green scheme saw significantly negative reaction. Primary producers have small margins, little power, and lots of personal investment.
- Another member said it would be possible to move forward if sensitive. Group 2 discussed "one source of truth" – ability to use farm's data alongside other databases.
- There was agreement that it would be vital to pass value back to farmers and ensure processes were not overly complicated or costly.

- One member argued that providing the data should not be where people are competing – should be competing on the outputs.

- A member said it would be useful to consider examples to develop trust and guardrails – goes beyond theory.
- An official said the Data WG were working on case studies, including to look at how value goes back to primary producers.

- One member said they believe eco-labelling should be mandated. Would force the need to define and regulate the data.
- However, another member said this was still subject to accessibility and support for SMEs.

- A member said data verification and assurance was vital – trust from farmers and producers, but also for avoiding greenwashing.

**Concluding points:**

- JB asked members to share any thoughts and feedback with officials.
- JB also noted that as the FDTP moves into its next phase of work, we need to ensure we have the right people in the room. We'll be getting in touch about membership changes.

- JB concluded that the focus on farm level data has come through. Many challenges, both technical and human, that we will take on board.
- Nutrition labelling took over two decades. We don't have as much time here, so we need to be pragmatic about how we really get going.