

# Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP)

## Eco Working Group – meeting minutes

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.

**Date:** 18 November 2026

**Time:** 10:00am to 1:00pm

**Venue:** Caxton House (UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) offices) and Microsoft Teams

### Attendees

Co-chairs:

- Judith Batchelar OBE, Non-Executive Director, Trustee and Advisor for Food Matters International Ltd
- Karen Lepper, Deputy Director for Environmental Sustainability, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Members:

- 22 Eco Working Group members
- officials from Defra, Welsh Government, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

### 1. Co-chairs' welcome and updates

The co-chairs welcomed members and introduced new members of the Defra policy team.

The policy team noted limited updates due to recent team changes and the September 2025 ministerial reshuffle.

Members were reminded that meetings operate under Chatham House Rules and in a competition-compliant manner.

The terms of reference were circulated, with comments invited by 5 December 2025. The co-chairs welcomed members and thanked UKRI for hosting.

#### 1.1 Feedback on nature metrics discussion

The FDTP team summarised key learnings from the September meeting, including:

- mixed views on expanding into nature metrics
- challenges around product-level data availability
- need to continue keeping abreast of EU-level work

- dependencies on upcoming publications, such as the Farming Profitability Review

## **2. Evaluation project and Theory of Change**

The purpose of the evaluation project is to improve the FDTP programme by considering:

- its approach and impact
- what we might have done better
- what we could do better in the future

### **2.1 Evaluation project initial findings**

Eunomia and ICF International presented early evaluation findings covering process evaluation, outcomes and value for money assessment.

Interviews were conducted with 12 stakeholders across policy, science and working groups.

Key themes identified were:

- data and footprinting standardisation – strong expertise and value in Defra-led method development
- approach to working – collaboration valued but can slow progress; this is now streamlined through the Eco Working Group structure
- political influences – continuity challenges following ministerial changes; senior champions recommended

A need for a clear strategic ‘North Star’ was highlighted, alongside improved stakeholder representation, particularly across small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and socially responsible investors.

### **2.2 Theory of Change**

ICF presented the Theory of Change, identifying the following points.

1. Three activity areas:
  - research and development
  - facilitation
  - policy
2. Five intermediate outcomes:
  - improved on-farm data and UK farming represented within footprinting
  - improved access to environmental impact datasets
  - accounting and reporting standardised footprinting
  - supply chain data-sharing governance structure and improved governance structure
  - increased motivation and capability

3. Two long-term outcomes:
  - improved data quality
  - better decision-making

ICF outlined next steps for the Theory of Change, including:

- developing a value for money framework
- improving data collection
- creating a programme dashboard to help track FDTP progress

Presenters took questions from across the group. These focused on outcomes considered and discounted from the project and further questions about the value for money framework development.

### **3. WRAP LED 4 Food and HESTIA updates**

The purpose of the Long-Term Improvement in Environmental Data for Food project (LED 4 Food) is to improve the use of and access to high-quality environmental impact data for the agri-food system.

Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and HESTIA colleagues presented progress across 4 LED 4 Food work packages, including 1,700+ impact assessments, 20,000+ product assessments, and support for 7 carbon calculator tools.

Data on processed and raw animal products, created during the LED 4 Food project, will be fully uploaded into HESTIA in January 2026. By March 2026, dairy data from Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), anonymised Cool Farm Tool data and animal feed data will also be made available.

Work continues on testing the product-level greenhouse gas methodology, with updated recommendations due in spring 2026.

Presenters took questions from members, which were mainly around:

- wider alignment of the developed product level methodologies with existing standards
- how to ensure project findings remain relevant as the data-system continues to develop

### **4. Forward look to 2026**

This session aimed to gather feedback and ideas to inform future Eco Working Group discussion topics in 2026 and included breakout group discussions facilitated by the Defra FDTP team.

Breakout discussions explored future Eco Working Group priorities, FDTP's international role, artificial intelligence (AI) considerations and workforce upskilling.

Key ideas included:

- a future session on AI uses and risks, including synthetic data
- developing a FDTP roadmap for 2026 to 2027 and establishing a clear 'North Star'
- continuing to ensure alignment with EU and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) work
- increased communications to different user groups, including farmers
- learning from other sectors and devolved nations

## **5. Summary and close**

The co-chairs shared their reflections from the meeting and thanked attendees.

The next Eco Working Group meeting is 23 February 2026.