

CODE OF CONDUCT

Task Force 3 – Improving the sustainability of the food value chain - in relation to primary producers and other actors in the chain

Report of the second meeting – 21st April 2021 (DRAFT)

The second meeting of Task Force 3 dedicated to the theme of “Improving the sustainability of the food value chain - in relation to primary producers and other actors in the chain” concentrated mainly **on the fine-tuning of Aspirational Objectives, indicative actions and enablers** for operationalising the identified potential aspirations.

First, a presentation from ILO, the International Labour Organisation, took place on SDG8 [promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all]. It covers, in particular, the respect of human rights, the International Labour Standards, the freedom of association, collective bargaining, abolition of child labour, etc. ILO stressed the importance that the EU endorse the leading role. The ILO highlighted the importance of the promotion of an enabling environment for the respect of social and human rights. It was recognised that this is a challenging issue as countries are at a different level of maturity, and particularly for SMEs.

Then, the Chair explained the state of play and a **compilation of members’ feedback** to the “homework” questions was presented by the rapporteur.

In accordance with the input received, the two aspirational objectives were confirmed by the participants:

- Creating sustained value in the European food supply chain through partnership, and
- Sustainable sourcing.

The actions were also confirmed in general and completed.

On the basis of the responses to the “homework” questions, the Chair presented a new version of a potential framework of Aspirational Objectives, Targets and Indicative Actions. The Chair proposed to add the feature of “enablers” to the structure of the code, which was welcomed by the participants.

During the discussions, in the ensuing deliberations, the **main points** included:

- It was agreed that animal welfare [AW] is not an element of environmental sustainability; however, AW should be mentioned in the context of food chain sustainability (T3), as one of the possible actions to improve sustainable production whilst ensuring that there is a fair return on investments for the producers. This could be attained by increasing the demand from consumers for such products, under adequate market conditions.
- In order to integrate AW in the aspirational objectives, a proposal was to reword “sustainable sourcing” by “responsible sourcing” or “responsible and sustainable sourcing”. Another solution could be to reword the third aspirational objective, “A socially (and ethically) strong food chain”. Further reflection is needed as to whether “ethically” is appropriate for inclusion as it extends well beyond AW and may therefore give rise to different interpretation; it was suggested that AW should not be at the same level as human rights.
- Finally, it was decided to add a specific action on AW as follows: *Support actions to (further) improve **animal welfare and human/animal health (AMR)**.*
- It was suggested that in the actions, a point on “sustainable recovery from COVID-19” is still missing.
- It was mentioned that the issue of sustainable diet is included in Group1.
- The FAO guidance for responsible Agricultural Supply Chains was promoted as a useful tool on different SDGs. There was discussion about whether this guidance should be included in an action or in an annex, which would contain a list of existing standards or enablers.

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- The reliability of certification is important not only for deforestation.
- It was suggested that, for the sake of consistency with the other groups, the actions shouldn't be split up in the three sustainability pillars. Several participants stressed the need for consistency, also with regard to the inclusion of all standards and enablers in an annex, rather than in an action.
- There was a discussion around the division of “sustainable sourcing” and due diligence particularly in view of the reality of SMEs. The reference to any due diligence needs to be proportionate. This needs to be given further consideration.

Building on the progress made during the meeting, preparatory **questions** for the **next (final) meeting** (20th May 2021, 10:00-13:00) were presented, the feedback on which is **due** by **10th May** at the close of business.
