

Project launched to tackle greenwashing in food and drink sectors

A project to establish standardised metrics to measure environmental performance of the food and drink sector has been launched by the Environment Agency.

The Environment Agency – working in partnership with the Institute for Manufacturing at the University of Cambridge, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Waste and Resources Action Programme and the British Standards Institute – is aiming to make it simpler for businesses and for the public to understand the environmental performance of companies in key areas such as greenhouse gas reduction and resource efficiency.

The initiative will help manufacturers to more effectively communicate their environmental performance to the public, minimising the opportunity for green washing.

It is also hoped that it will incentivise companies toward greener manufacturing processes and business operations helping to tackle climate change.

Project lead Becca Tremain, of the Environment Agency, said:

One of the big challenges for food businesses trying to mitigate climate change is how to communicate their environmental performance that goes beyond legal compliance effectively and efficiently.

Different food businesses have developed and adopted various environmental metrics and it can be time-consuming for food businesses to collect data from different supplier systems.

This project seeks to address this challenge by standardising environmental metrics for food businesses that go beyond legal compliance.

It aims to provide an effective and efficient solution to enable the automation of environmental performance data transfer across different food businesses.

The project has been made possible by a £195,000 grant from the [£3.7 million Regulators' Pioneer Fund](#) launched by The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The fund enables UK regulators and local authorities to help create a UK regulatory environment that unleashes innovation and makes the UK the best

place to start and grow a business.

The partnership will be working with IEMA, the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, trade associations and private sector organisations including Sainsbury's, Nestle, Cranswick, 2 Sisters and Vitacress to understand and ensure the feasibility of the metrics.

Sarah Mukherjee, Chief Executive of IEMA, said:

Measuring the environmental performance of the food and drink sector is a complex task, but a vital one given the size and economic significance of the sector.

IEMA is uniquely positioned to contribute to the challenge given the expertise of its members in developing approaches to both understanding and mitigating the environmental impacts of supply chains across all areas of the economy.

The Regulators' Pioneer Fund is part of wider government work on regulation. This includes the recent Reforming the Framework for Better Regulation consultation, and the Better Regulation Committee, chaired by the Chancellor, which is driving an ambitious reform agenda to ensure the UK's regulatory framework is fit for purpose and delivers the Government's strategic objectives in its [25 Year Environment Plan](#)

Business Minister Lord Callanan said:

Good regulation should spur entrepreneurship, not stand in its way, and this project will help keep the UK at the cutting-edge of innovation.

This project aiming to standardise environmental metrics for the food and drink sector could pave the way for exciting developments in the sector, bringing benefits to British businesses and consumers alike.