

Food Network Steering Group – March 15, 2011
Proposed Terms of Reference

Purpose

The high level Steering Group will:

- set the direction, pace and work programme priorities
- commission specific project plans to deliver the goals of the Network from working groups;
- advise on and help address difficult issues referred to it by working groups;
- provide final review of pledges developed by Food Network working groups (individual pledges will continue to be signed off by the Network Chair);
- provide final review of the menu of monitoring and evaluation activities developed by Food Network working groups to ensure the pledges are turned into action and have had the desired effect in terms of impact.

Membership

- Secretary of State
- 1 independent Chair
- 1 senior representative from a relevant health charity
- 1 senior academic with expertise in nutritional impacts on public health
- 1 senior representative from a relevant professional body
- 1 senior representative from a relevant consumer body
- 1 senior representative from each of the 3 main trade bodies (retail, catering and manufacturing)
- 1 senior representative from a company in each of the 3 industry sectors (retail, catering and manufacturing)
- DH Secretariat

Meeting frequency

It is envisaged that the Steering Group will meet 4-5 times per year.

Secretariat

The secretariat will be provided by DH. The secretariat can be contacted via the Food Network mailbox: foodnetwork@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

Accountability

The Steering Group is accountable to the Responsibility Deal Plenary Group, chaired by the Secretary of State for Health, which oversees the Public Health Responsibility Deal.

Working arrangements

Task-specific working groups will be convened to deliver products commissioned by the Steering Group. These working groups will be responsible for:

- drafting proposals for pledges within the scope of the commission set by the Steering Group for their work stream;
- developing proposals, technical underpinning and /or guidance needed to facilitate development or delivery of pledges for their work stream;
- identifying opportunities to align the work of the Food Network with other initiatives, eg. C4L;
- working up monitoring and evaluation proposals for their work stream.

Outputs from the working groups will be tested with a wider range of external partners through the e-Food Network (either electronically or via focused events) before being considered by the Steering Group and put to the RD Plenary Group.

It is expected that the focussed and time-bound nature of their work will require an intense burst of activity usually over a period of a number of months.

The final makeup of each working group will vary depending on the needs of the workstream but will:

- reflect the need for a high level of involvement of all sectors of business, as well as the role for other partners such as NGOs and professional bodies embedded in the overall RD approach;
- be expected to include representation from a cross section of partner organisations to include both technical and broader policy input from industry;
- be proposed by the Chair and Secretariat following discussion and calls for expertise, as appropriate, and agreed with the Steering Group.

Working arrangements will be flexed to ensure an appropriate balance between development and review of draft outputs, and may be carried out through a mix of physical meetings and/or electronic forums.

Working Groups Chairs, whether selected from the Steering Group, DH or elsewhere, will be supported by DH officials in order to achieve the appropriate

balance between leading the work with sufficient pace/momentum and providing technical/policy expertise to shape the work and deliver outputs that will meet Food Network and RD needs.

The Wider Network (the e-Food Network) has a key role in ensuring that the widest possible range of players from business, NGOs and others are able to take part in the work of the Network, influence it from an informed position, and act as advocates for the Responsibility Deal approach. Comprising the current participants as well as any other parties who have expressed a desire to be involved or kept informed of the work of the Food Network, it will:

- receive regular updates from the Food Network Secretariat;
- act as a pool of expertise from which working group members will usually be drawn;
- have the opportunity to contribute electronically to the development of new pledges;
- attend events organised by Food Network working groups to seek input or test outputs relating to specific pledges;
- have the opportunity to sign up ahead of the launch of new pledges.

Engagement, Communication and Advocacy Activities

To maximise dissemination of information about participation and engagement in the Network's activities, it is suggested that these formal arrangements are supplemented by:

- increased communication in the form of regular, usually monthly, stakeholder bulletins within and beyond the e-Food Network, including colleagues in the Devolved Administrations, updating them on developments within the working groups, the Network and the RD Plenary Board;
- the opportunity for the wider Network to communicate with the various groups via a single Food Network mailbox: foodnetwork@dh.gsi.gov.uk
- additional interfaces managed by DH officials to facilitate discussion and commitment to individual pledges;
- additional interfaces managed by DH officials to facilitate adoption, support and advocacy of the Network's work which focuses on communication and engagement activities.

Date

Draft to be discussed at the first meeting of the Steering Group, on March 15 2011.