Terms of Reference for Front-of-pack labelling Working Groups

Preamble
In December 2011, the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation (FoFR) agreed to support Recommendation 50 of Labelling Logic: Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy (the Blewett Review), namely that an interpretive Front-of-Pack Labelling (FoPL) system should be developed. In its response, FoFR was careful to emphasise its view that the divergence of stakeholder views regarding FoPL means that government is best placed to lead a collaborative process to deliver on this task. However, FoFR was also careful to point out that the food labelling regulatory framework must strike a balance between seeking to ensure good public health outcomes (both short and longer term) and ensuring a strong and profitable food industry.

Context
The Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council Policy Statement for Front of pack labelling says:

“A FOPL scheme is a scheme that can guide consumer choice towards healthier food options and aims to:

Guide consumer choice by:
1. Enabling direct comparison between individual foods that, within the overall diet, may contribute to the risk factors of various diet related chronic diseases.
2. Being readily understandable and meaningful across socio-economic groups, culturally and linguistically diverse groups and low literacy/low numeracy groups.
3. Increasing awareness of foods that, within the overall diet, may contribute positively or negatively to the risk factors of diet related chronic diseases.”

Matters for consideration
The Working Groups will develop their work in the context of the Objective, Scope and Design Principles agreed by the Project Committee.

The Technical Design Working Group will be required to develop options and recommendations for the Project Committee on a proposed FoPL system including identifying and addressing any difficult or contentious questions or issues. The collaborative design process will focus on addressing issues of concern, exploring new approaches and exploring possibilities for building on existing schemes.

The Group will report back to the Project Committee by Friday 11 May 2012 with a proposal for future work and will provide written material suitable for presentation to the FoFR, outlining the above activities.

The Implementation Working Group will be required to develop an implementation plan and framework that contains options and recommendations to the Project Committee on the following matters:
- options available for regulatory, co-regulatory and self-regulatory approaches, including strengths and weaknesses
- the process, timeline and evidence base for monitoring and evaluating the FoPL system
- the education and social marketing aspects.

The Group will report back to the Project Committee by Friday 11 May 2012 with a proposal for future work and will provide written material suitable for presentation to the FoFR, outlining the above activities.

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1 The FoPL Project considers Labelling Logic recommendation 50 only, and does not address ‘health claims’.