

FOOD POLICY BAROMETER: a tool to help critically assess policy ideas relating to food & farming

Beta version paper dated October 2020

*The following are **questions** we at the Food Ethics Council have found useful when considering policy ideas relating to food and farming. It is aimed at policymakers & policy influencers and is intended to be a **prompt** to ensure policies are looked at through a wide-angle lens rather than 'tunnel vision' glasses. It should be used in conjunction with the best evidence (of all kinds) available to come to an **'in the round' judgement**. Please fill in the template overleaf.*

1. AIMS ('the right goals?')

Are the **aims** of the policy in line with fair, healthy, humane & environmentally sustainable food systems? Are the aims clear and transparent? Are the policy goals 'right'? Is the underlying rationale - and the underlying assumptions behind the policy - sound?

2. POLICY MAKING PROCESS ('fair and inclusive policy making process?')

How **open, inclusive and transparent has the policy making process been**, and have appropriate interest groups had a fair say? *[Who has lobbied for that policy? Any voices not heard that should have been?]*

3. LIKELY IMPACTS (help ensure holistic policy; and think through intended and unintended consequences)

Note - If any are 'significantly worse', i.e. below your own 'red lines', it should automatically score poorly

Make your own (subjective) assessment – based on the best evidence & views available – on whether the idea is likely to lead to food system outcomes that are (i) fair (to people) (ii) environmentally sustainable (iii) healthy and (iv) humane. We recommend completing the template overleaf – ideally with others.

4. DOES POLICY FIT PURPOSE?

Are there alternative/ 'better' ways to reach prescribed policy goals?

5. COHERENCE (with other policies)

How robust is the policy idea and how coherent is it with other (existing) policies?

6. OTHER FACTORS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN COMING TO AN INFORMED JUDGMENT (which we do not focus on here)

- Acceptability – level of support from key stakeholders including govt, the public, public health & industry
- Cost effectiveness
- Feasibility - how easy or hard the action is to implement
- Monitoring – how will the policy be monitored?
- Who/ what is likely to gain most from this policy, and likely to lose most from this policy?
- What provisions (if any) are there to mitigate negative impacts?

Your assessment of the policy idea under consideration – TEMPLATE TO COMPLETE *(continued overleaf)*

1. Consider whether the policy idea is likely to contribute to positive outcomes. Please put one X in each row below and explain why

Likely to contribute to outcomes that are:	In making your assessment, you may wish to consider:	Significantly worse	Worse	No significant change or can't judge	Beneficial	Significantly beneficial	WHY?
FAIR (TO PEOPLE)	<i>Those on low incomes; those working in food system; share of economic value</i>						
HEALTHY	<i>Human health and nutrition</i>						
HUMANE	<i>Farm animal health & welfare – incl. allowing animals to live good lives & humane deaths; impacts on other species</i>						
ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE	<i>Climate crisis, biodiversity loss, soils, food loss & waste</i>						

Note: if there are any Xs in the 'significantly worse' category, we would categorise the policy idea as 'harmful' and urge you to reject or modify it.

2. 'In the round', what's your **overall assessment** on this policy idea (powerful, promising, flawed or harmful) and why?



Your assessment of the policy idea – TEMPLATE TO COMPLETE *(continued)*

3. Any key arguments or evidence that influenced your judgement?

4. What questions remain unanswered for you and/ or further evidence would you ideally like to see?

5. (a) Is there an alternative policy intervention that you think has (more) potential?

5. (b) [If so] How might such an alternative better contribute to outcomes that are fair, healthy, humane and environmentally sustainable?

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This is a beta version and we would love to hear (via info@foodethicscouncil.org) how you have used this tool/ prompt, what you found useful and constructive suggestions for further strengthening it.