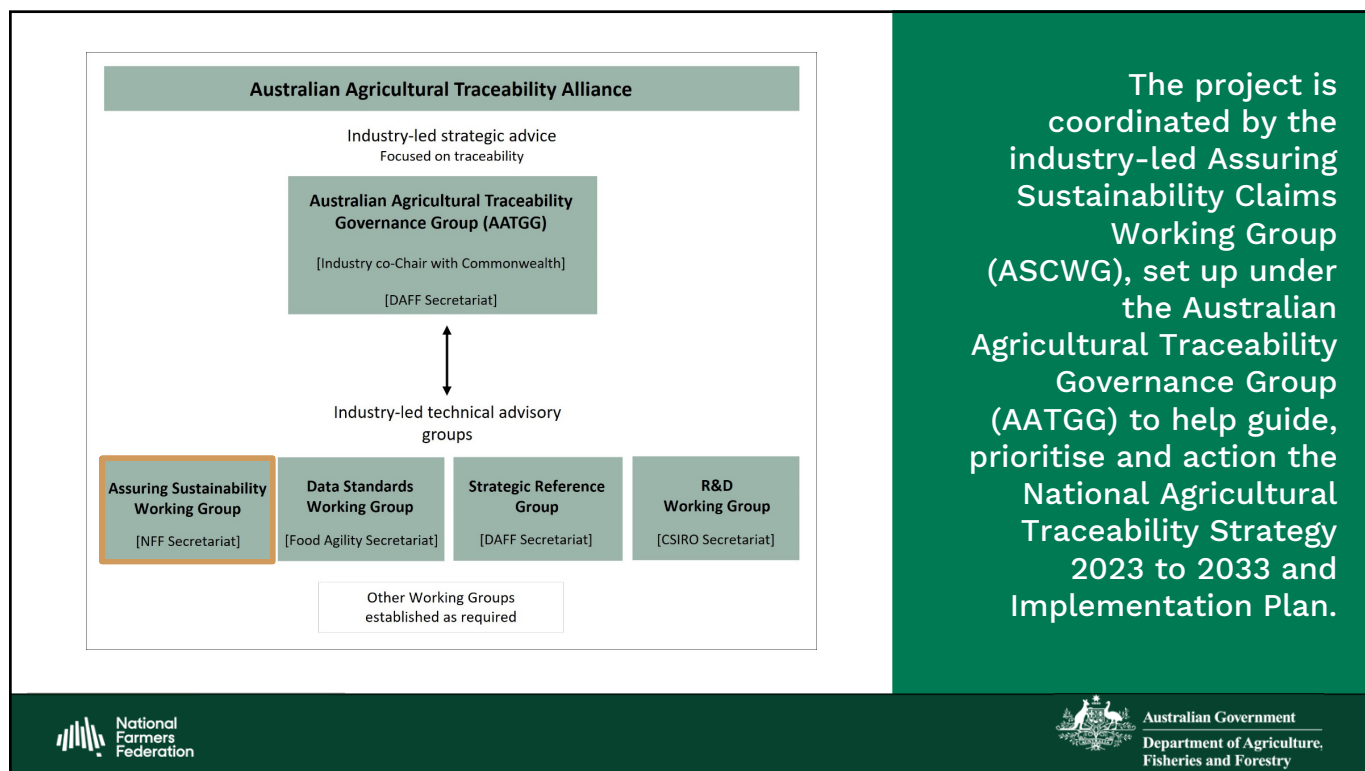
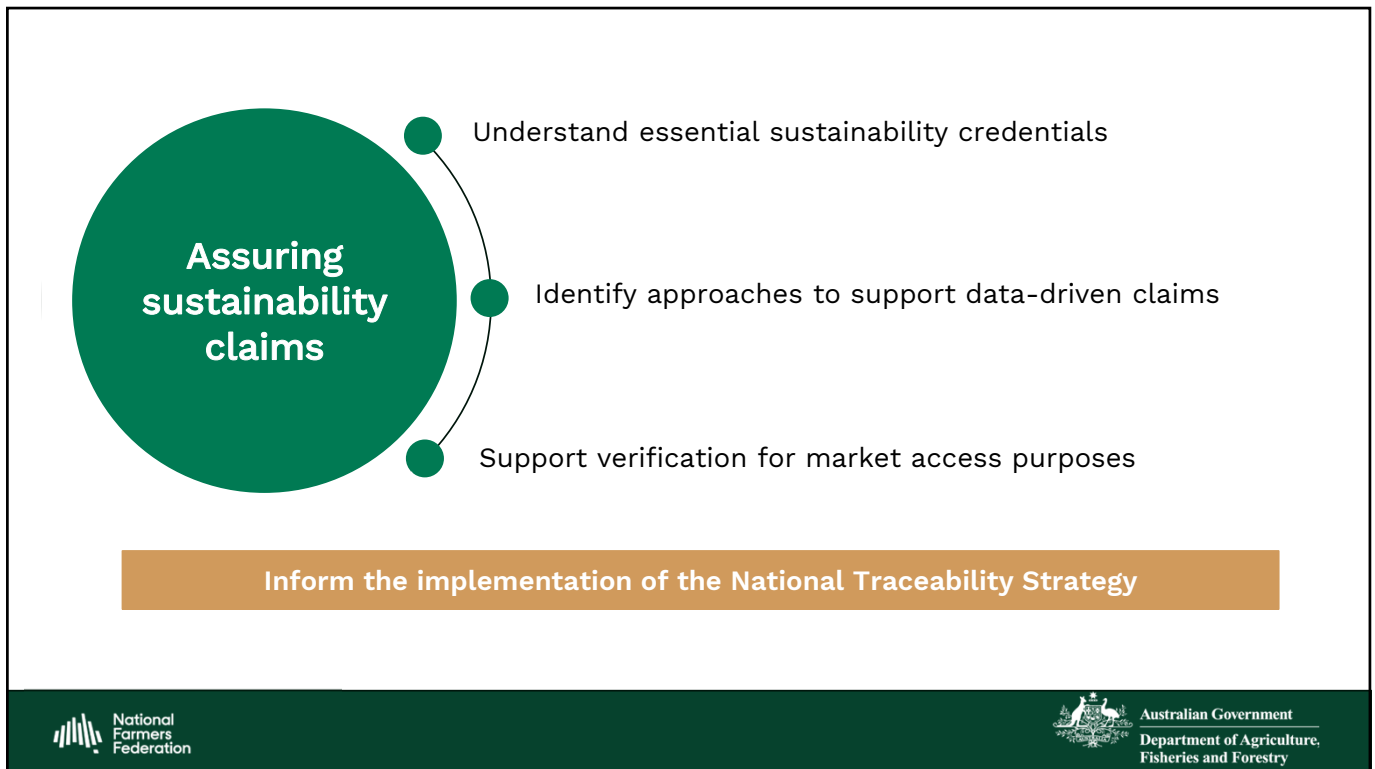




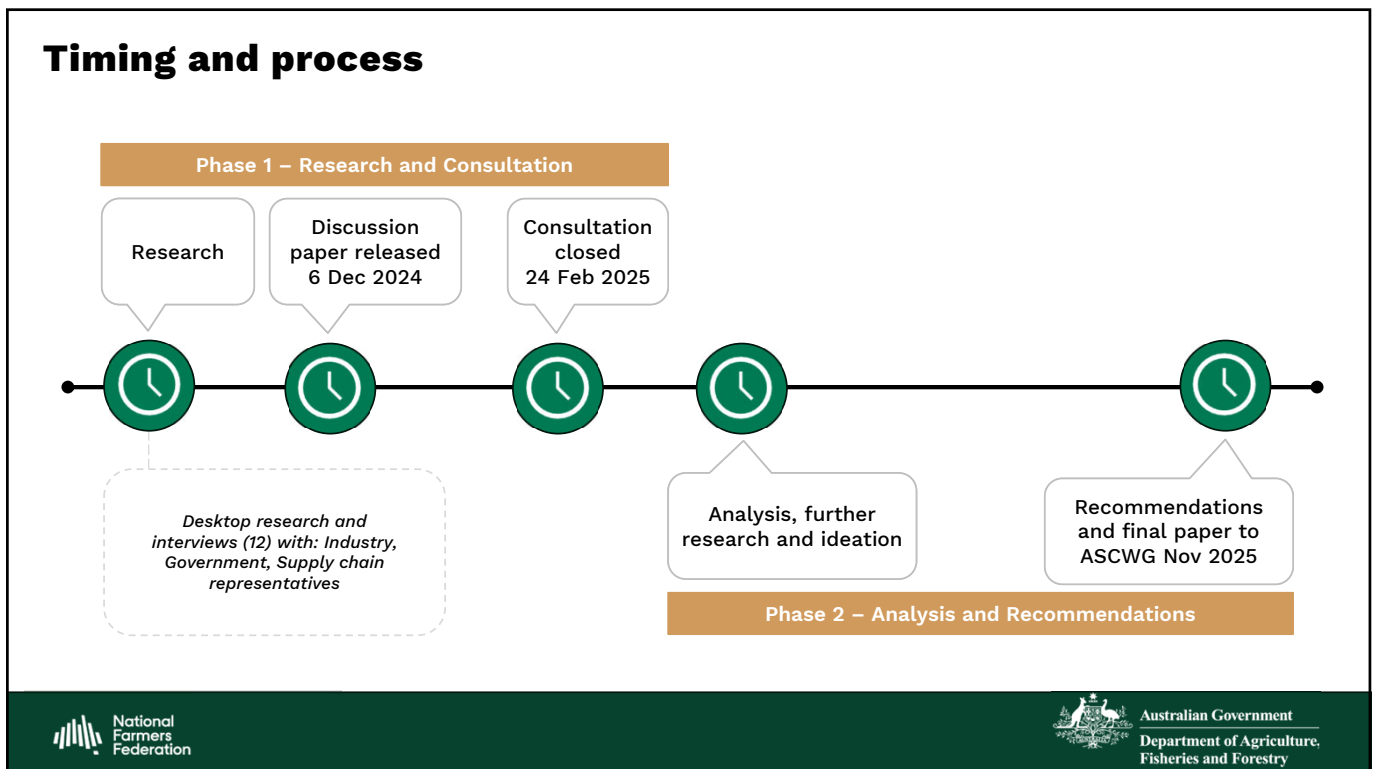
1



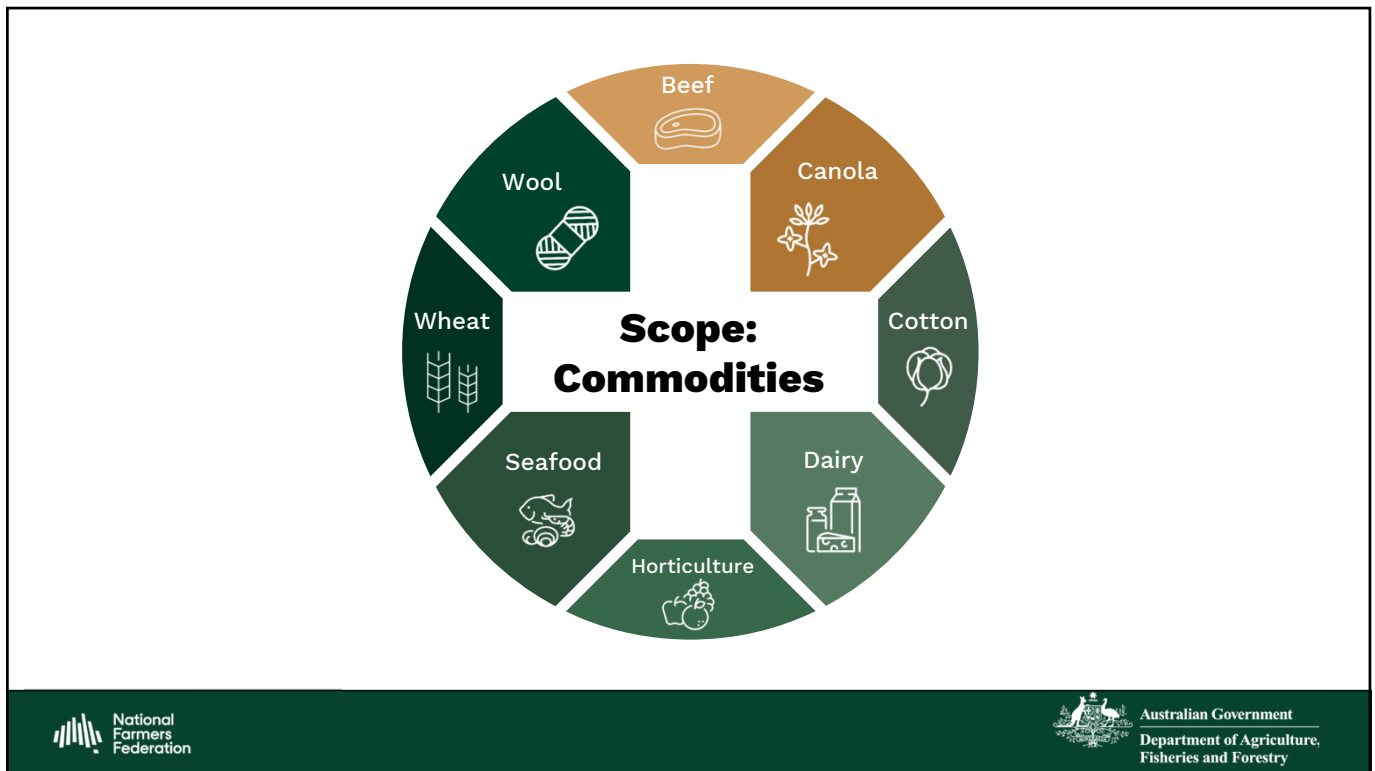
2



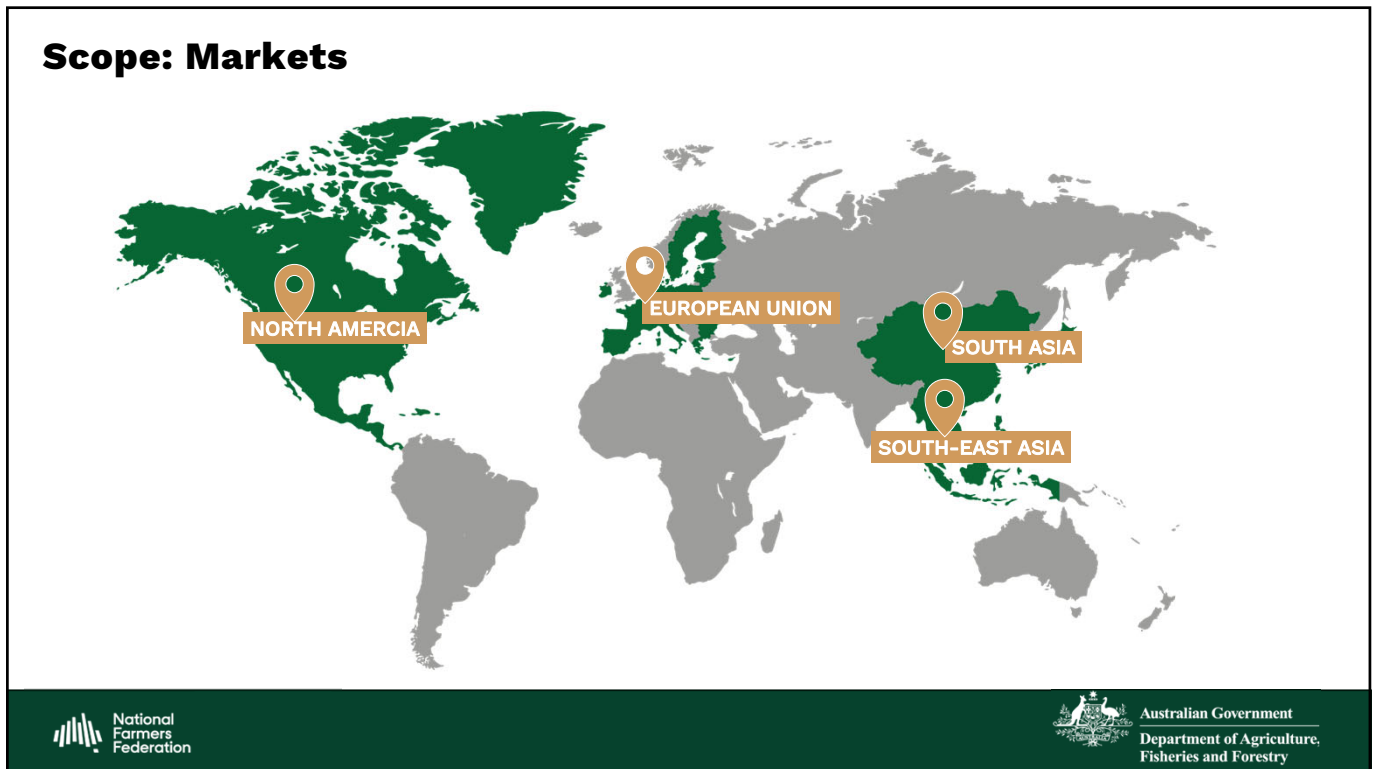
3



4



5



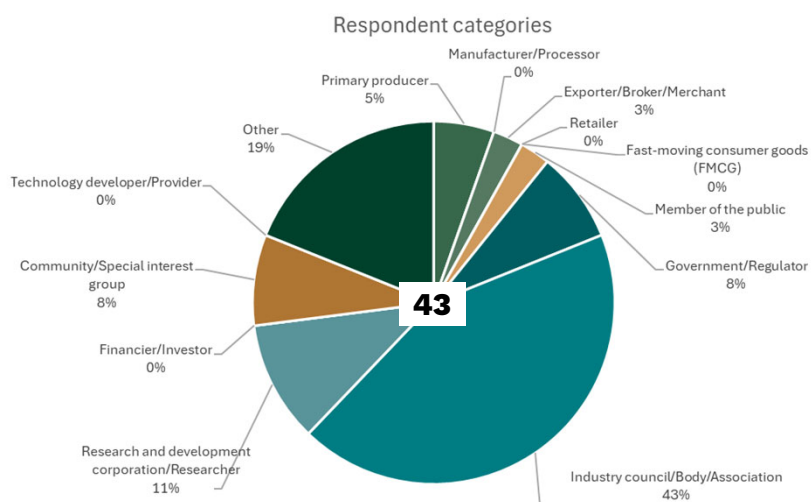
6

Outcomes of comment process



Assuring agricultural sustainability claims: discussion paper

Version 1.0



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

7

Side findings

Driver

Not consumers. A combination of regulatory action, corporate responsibility strategies, finance sector disclosure rules and in some cases activist and civil society pressure.

Premiums

Farm-gate premiums are the exception not the rule. Either: retail-side, tied to consumer-facing labels, or indirect via access to premium markets (ISCC).

Prescription vs outcomes

Markets and regulators want prescriptive requirements. Industry focuses on outcomes to enable flexibility in what is done on-farm (because a farm is not a farm).

Increasing demands

Certification is the most sought after credential. BUT increasing requests for MORE. Additional supply chain requests: declarations, questionnaires, customer audits etc.

Context is king

What is accepted as a credential, the level of verification and assurance required is highly variable based on the market and commodity and risk and sensitivity.



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

8

Challenges

Definitions

Terminology and conceptual confusion leads to confusion about assurance expectations and what is provided as evidence.

Trust & credibility

Without transparent governance, reliable data and clear oversight, claims risk being dismissed as greenwashing and market confidence is diminished.

Data & consistency

Fragmented, duplicative systems and proliferating standards create inefficiency and erode credibility.

Producer burden & value

Uncoordinated demands drain time and resources through duplication and loss of productivity.

Global alignment & influence

Sustainability standards are fragmented; in this vacuum overseas standards become the default.

Sentiment...

Little appetite for a single over-arching system (as in database, certification etc.)

BUT a coordinated mechanism to improve transparency and comparability of sustainability credentials had merit.

Terminology

Sustainability claim

A sustainability claim is a statement made by a producer, exporter or brand about the environmental, social or governance-related performance of a product, process or organisation.

It communicates to stakeholders, such as customers, investors, retailers or regulators, that certain practices or outcomes are being undertaken or achieved in through production, process or by the organisation.

Sustainability credential

For a sustainability claim to have impact and credibility, the customer needs some level of **assurance** that the claim can be trusted.

A sustainability credential is a signal of assurance that shows the evidence behind a claim has been verified and by whom.


A sustainability credential can therefore be considered a **trust anchor**: structures or mechanisms that provide confidence in the data or information presented.

The form of credential is contextual, based on the market or buyers' sensitivity to risk as well as level of assurance required and cost of verification.

A claim is an outward-facing message - A credential is one form of evidence behind the claim

ASSURING SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS AS PART OF A LARGER DATA ECOSYSTEM





Leveraging the AASF and Data Ecosystem

The approach to assuring sustainability claims needs to operate within a broader sustainability data ecosystem and be based on national principles, criteria and indicators.

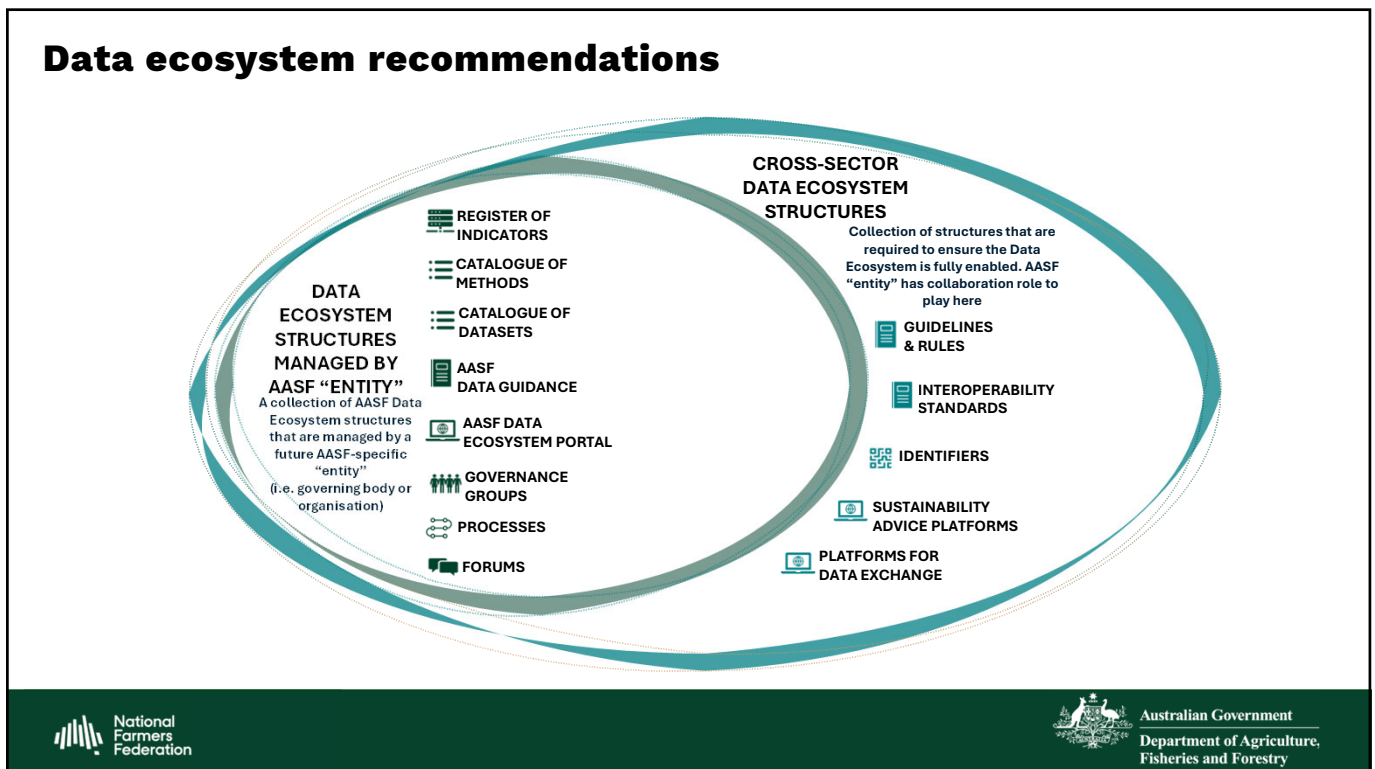
This would enable consistent assessment of claim and credential quality, promote alignment with national priorities and international requirements and provide a structured platform to link claims and data across the supply chain.

It would bring clarity, comparability and credibility to credentials used across Australian agriculture to make sustainability claims.

National Farmers Federation

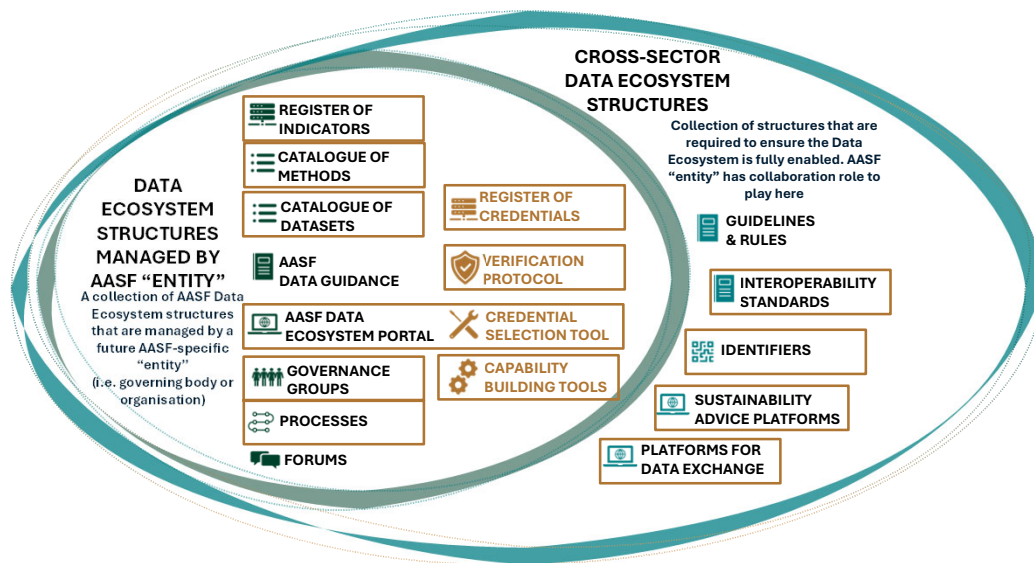
Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

13



14

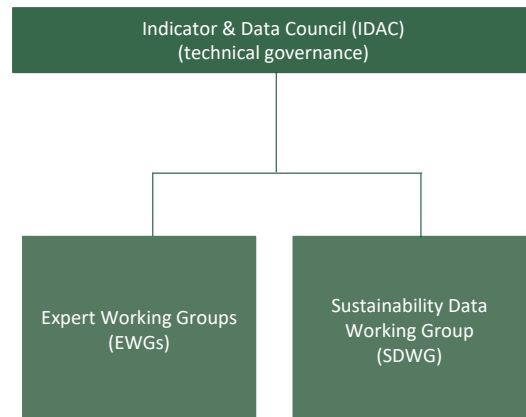
Assuring claims through the data ecosystem...



15

Data ecosystem governance structures

ASA Alliance – Responsible for the AASF

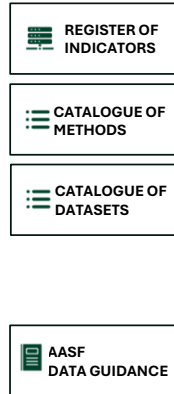


16

Data ecosystem governance structures

ASA Alliance – Responsible for the AASF

Indicator & Data Council (IDAC)
(technical governance)



17

Assuring claims through data ecosystem governance structures

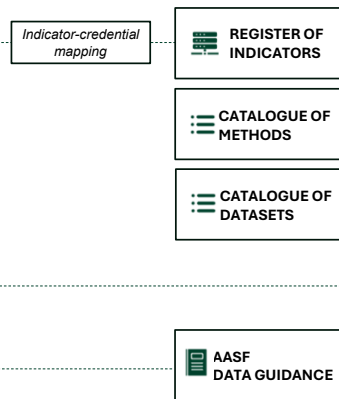
ASA Alliance – Responsible for the AASF

Credentials Governance Group
(credentials governance)

Standards setting
Market alignment
Endorsement
Complaints etc.



Indicator & Data Council (IDAC)
(technical governance)



18

Addressing the challenges

Definitions

Provides standardised definitions and establishes a process for transparent and comparable sustainability credentials underpinned by trusted governance, giving clarity on what claims exist, how they are verified and by whom.

Trust & credibility

Leveraging the evidence base provided by the AASF and the Data Ecosystem to make claims more transparent and comparable provides greater assurance as to their credibility.

Data & consistency

A national, coordinated approach that supports interoperability of data makes visible how different claims programs, standards and schemes fit together.

Producer burden & value

Encourages reduction in duplicative data by mapping which credentials satisfy which indicators, aims to enable a “collect one, use many times” approach to data collection and reporting.

Global alignment & influence

Strengthens Australia’s ability to shape standards and rules that govern its exports and assures that sustainability claims made by Australian agriculture are credible, consistent and internationally accepted.

Next steps

Prepare recommendations

Finalise with ASCWG

Submit to AATGG



Entity data ecosystem structures



Register of Indicators

Well governed list of indicators aligned with AASF Principles and Criteria along with details of contexts in which they are relevant.



Governance groups

IDAC, EWGs to support maintenance of Registers and Catalogues and SDWG to address cross-cutting sustainability data issues.



Sustainability Data Guidance

Documents, tools and other advice for the creation and assessment of AASF-aligned datasets.



DES portal

Entry point for stakeholders to discover and access the various information artefacts and tools for the AASF Data Ecosystem and the NSCS.



Processes

IDAC, EWGs to support maintenance of Registers and Catalogues and SDWG to address cross-cutting sustainability data issues.



Forums

Opportunities for community members to gather and share knowledge, discuss issues and build capability around AASF aligned data



Catalogue of methods

Maintained list of context-specific methods for measuring AASF indicators.



Catalogue of datasets

Maintained list of datasets (and their locations) that contain data related to specific AASF indicators.



National Farmers Federation



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

21

Entity data ecosystem structures + the claims



Register of indicators

Well governed list of indicators aligned with AASF Principles and Criteria along with details of contexts in which they are relevant.



Governance groups

IDAC, EWGs and SDWG with the addition of a Credentials Governance Group that has close working relationships with the other groups.



Sustainability Data Guidance

Documents, tools and other advice for the creation and assessment of AASF-aligned datasets.



Register of credentials

Well governed list of verified sustainability credentials used across Australian agriculture (scope, topics, verification, claims and governance etc.).



DES portal

Entry point for stakeholders to discover and access the various information artefacts and tools for the AASF Data Ecosystem and the NSCS.



Processes

IDAC, EWGs to support maintenance of Registers and Catalogues and SDWG to address cross-cutting sustainability data issues.



Forums

Opportunities for community members to gather and share knowledge, discuss issues and build capability around AASF aligned data



Verification protocol

A nationally-governed standard that evaluates how well each credential verifies the claims it supports, using consistent criteria.



Catalogue of methods

Maintained list of context-specific methods for measuring AASF indicators.



Catalogue of datasets

Maintained list of datasets (and their locations) that contain data related to specific AASF indicators.



Capability building tools

Extension and digital literacy programs, designed to improve digital readiness.



Credential selection tool

Tool that helps stakeholders identify suitable credentials based on claim type, market, verification level and cost.



National Farmers Federation



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

22

Cross-sector data ecosystem structures



Interoperability standards

Standards supporting the exchange of data within the agriculture sector. Includes but not limited to interoperability standards, ontologies, etc.



Identifiers

Labels/names for the important things (parties, places, products and processes) within the agriculture industry.



Guidelines and rules for data

Whole of agriculture sector guidance/rules /policies around the capture, storage and use of data.



Platforms for Data Exchange

Online platforms enabling parties to exchange data in an efficient, effective and secure manner,



Sustainability Advice Platform

Online platforms publishing benchmark data and advice regarding agricultural sustainability.



National
Farmers
Federation



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

23

Cross-sector data ecosystem structures + claims



Interoperability standards

Standards supporting the exchange of data within the agriculture sector. Includes but not limited to interoperability standards, ontologies, etc.



Identifiers

Labels/names for the important things (parties, places, products and processes) within the agriculture industry.



Guidelines and rules for data

Whole of agriculture sector guidance/rules /policies around the capture, storage and use of data.



Platforms for Data Exchange

Online platforms enabling parties to exchange data in an efficient, effective and secure manner,



Sustainability Advice Platform

Online platforms publishing benchmark data and advice regarding agricultural sustainability.



National
Farmers
Federation



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

24