

# EU for Sustainable Food System, Energy, Raw Materials Chapters in India FTA

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**New Delhi:** The European Union has proposed separate chapters on sustainable food systems and energy and raw materials in its free trade agreement with India as part of which it has sought profitable food systems,

inclusion of environmental performance, methane emissions measurement standards and facilitating trade and investment in the areas of energy and raw materials.

Officials said that intense negotiations are expected on these issues as they have been included for the first time in India's trade agreements. The first round of India-EU FTA talks took place from June 27-July 1 and the next round is scheduled for

September in Brussels.

The EU said that a sustainable food system is one which is "profitable throughout (economic sustainability); it has broad-based benefits for society (social sustainability); and it has a positive or neutral impact on the natural environment (environmental sustainability), including on climate change". ET has reviewed the proposed texts.

It has suggested an annual action plan to monitor the progress by establishing objectives and milestones for each of the actions included in it.

"The EU's proposal that the food systems should be profitable but our Public Distribution System is not. India will have to safeguard its interests on PDS and minimum support price if such

an obligation kicks in," said an expert on trade issues.

Similarly, the EU has proposed "reducing the use of antimicrobials, chemical pesticides and fertilizers, improving animal welfare and promoting sustainable food production methods and practices, such as organic farming", which experts said may have an implication on India's dairy produce and meat exports.



"We just had a preliminary round of talks with the EU and this is a basic text on which negotiations will happen. These are new chapters and we will arrive at our final positions after more negotiations," said an official.

The EU has also proposed to "promote the uptake of

healthy and sustainable diets, reducing the carbon footprint of consumption" through the chapter on food systems.

"Though this may appear to be cooperation, it will be stringent cooperation that India must be careful about," said the trade expert.

The EU's proposals find resonance in the Geneva Package of the 12th

Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization. The MC12 declaration on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Agreement mandates a work programme

to "facilitate global food security and more sustainable food systems, including through sustainable growth and innovation in agricultural production and international trade".