

Food Industry Benchmarking Toolkit

4 HOW TO CREATE CHANGE USING THE FINDINGS FROM YOUR NATIONAL BENCHMARK

How your organisation can develop a national food industry benchmark, aligned with global standards and metrics

We believe there are six key stakeholder groups (see below) with whom you can engage to create change in the food industry. The purpose of this engagement is to use the findings from the benchmark to build momentum in different stakeholder groups to create change in the industry. Stakeholders can leverage benchmark results in various ways. Examples of activities by different stakeholder groups are shown in Box 1.

BOX 1: KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- **Investors:** Targeted engagement with companies, and/or industries, market shaping, thought leadership, voting strategy, exclusion or divestment, internal expertise development, investment screening and structuring
- **Business and industry platforms:** Targeted engagement with companies and/or industries, learning and dialogue, guidance and strategy
- **Civil society organisations:** Targeted engagement with companies and/or industries, evidence-based advocacy and influencing
- **Research & academia:** Research into key topics or industries, development of case studies, guidance for companies or policymakers
- **Policymakers:** Targeted engagement with companies and/or industries, gaps in industry performance where policy interventions may be needed (i.e. regulation) or policy incentives may be valuable
- **Citizens:** Campaigns, consumer choice, consumer pressure on businesses.

EXAMPLES OF ENGAGING WITH STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Here we provide three case studies of engagement to give an idea of how benchmarking initiatives have engaged with stakeholders previously. We will build on these case studies and examples over time as the coalition evolves.

EXAMPLE 1 - multistakeholder engagement in the UK from The Food Foundation

The Food Foundation's UK Plating Up Progress (PUP) work focused on engagement with three stakeholder groups: businesses, the government, and investors.

Through the **business engagement** phases, a 75% response rate to the analysis was achieved, with 60% of businesses actively engaging on their PUP scorecard. By building trusted relationships with the businesses the project was able to incentivise them to make new commitments and improve their performance. Here we highlight some key impacts of this work in 2020/2021 (see Box 2)

The project also focused on **government** engagement, producing a government briefing based on our benchmark results and calling for mandatory food business reporting. This briefing was deliberately timed to influence a key political opportunity (the development of a National Food Strategy) and helped to ensure that mandatory food business reporting of healthy and sustainable food sales and food waste was included in the NFS recommendations to the government.

In terms of wider investor engagement, the project has built a network of up to 20 **investors** through workshops, investor briefings and webinars, in addition to collaborating with investor-focused initiatives such as Access To Nutrition Initiative (ATNI), Farm Animal Investment Risk & Return (FAIRR) and CDP. In 2021 The Food Foundation facilitated an **investors' co-signed letter to the government in support of the National Food Strategy** recommendations for mandatory food business reporting of healthy and sustainable food sales and food waste. The letter was signed by investors representing £2.8 trillion in assets under management or advice, resulting in good media coverage and aims to ensure the introduction of mandatory reporting on sales of healthy and sustainable food by food businesses in the UK.

BOX 2: FOOD INDUSTRY PROGRESS IN THE UK

Food industry progress

Five out of eleven supermarkets now have targets for sales of healthy or healthier food, compared to two this time last year.

Two supermarkets now report on the percentage of their protein sales that come from plant-based products, compared to no supermarkets last year, with one also having a target to increase sales of plant-based alternatives by 300% by 2025.

One supermarket now has a public target to increase sales of fruit and vegetables, with another having a public target to increase the proportion of total sales tonnage that comes from vegetables, compared to no supermarkets last year.

Four out of eighteen restaurants, caterers and wholesalers have a commitment to increase sales of vegetables, although these commitments were already in place in 2020.

All supermarkets, and thirteen out of eighteen restaurants, caterers and wholesalers, now either have net zero climate change targets that include scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions or have started (or committed to start) measuring their scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions.

EXAMPLE 2 – investor engagement by the Access To Nutrition Initiative

The Access To Nutrition Initiative (ATNI) produces indexes that benchmark food manufacturers and supermarkets on multiple nutrition indicators and represents a good case study of how to engage with stakeholders on key food issues, in this case nutrition. ATNI also worked closely with The Food Foundation and WBA to help make sure that there was alignment between the indicators being used in their nutrition-specific work and in our broader work on food systems. ATNI has been a supporter of this toolkit and international coalition work during 2021 and remains an important part of the wider collaboration on food industry benchmarking. Below we include a brief description of how ATNI has worked with investors as well as the link to more detailed case studies of investor engagement with the food industry on issues concerning nutrition

ATNI works extensively with the investment community to ensure that its indexes provide crucial information on companies' nutrition performance. Investors then use this information in their own analysis and engagement with

companies, as well as working alongside ATNI to create change. Specifically, ATNI has an active investor support function for a growing group of investor signatories to the *Investor Expectations on Nutrition, Diets and Health* (the group counts 76 investors representing US\$ 16.6 trillion in assets under management as of November 2021). The ATNI investor support function facilitates collaborative investor engagement following the publication of ATNI indexes. For example, in 2018 through this process, investors collectively wrote to 18 large food manufacturers with 95 specific asks for the companies, based on the data provided by ATNI's benchmarking work. 50% of companies covered by ATNI have acknowledged that ATNI's work has impacted their policies and practices, and the investor engagement remains a crucial part of ATNI's work.

By creating a collective voice of investors in support of the work, ATNI has forged a powerful stakeholder voice that is bringing food issues into the mainstream of investor thinking, and it a good example of how to use a benchmark to work with investors on company engagement. You can read more about this collective action from ATNI and other specific investor actions on nutrition [here](#)

EXAMPLE 3 – multistakeholder engagement from WBA

The research period of WBA's 2021 benchmark is followed by the Year of Impact; this means working with stakeholders to translate the methodologies and benchmarks into collective action and learning to drive positive corporate behaviour. Building upon the engagement and relationships built throughout the research period, this involves collaborating with organisations to present and raise awareness of the findings (often at global forums) and co-planning activities that lead to outcomes to drive impact.

To maximise impact, it is strategic to coordinate these activities collectively around the same topic, which is the aim of WBA's Collective Impact Coalitions (CICs). A WBA CIC is a time-bound commitment of global multi-stakeholders with the WBA Alliance at its core. Participants of the CIC take coordinated actions to incentivise key companies to measurably improve their performance on a specific issue crucial to achieving a positive change in the food system, using WBA benchmarks to track progress.