

Action Brief for and with Chefs, Restaurants and Food Service



Chefs, restaurants, and the food service sector are at the front line of food systems transformation, with significant influence over both supply chains and eater choices. This community has a unique opportunity to innovate, engage and lead positive change by making healthy, sustainable and delicious food options more desirable, widely available, accessible and affordable to all.

As innovators, entrepreneurs and creatives, this community operates as businesses, whose vision for change must be aligned with a viable business model. Taken as a whole, this Action Brief lays out this business case.

This brief was developed by the CfA members as a reflection on their contributions to an urgent transition to healthy, safe, and just food systems. As a community we are committed to regularly updating this brief in line with our commitments, contribution and ambitions.



SECTION 01

Calls to Action

What this community must start, strengthen, or transform to drive change from within.

01.1

Expand diversity in food offerings and diversify supply chains.

Design menus to offer increased diverse ingredients that are environmentally sustainable and nutritious, including a more blended and nuanced mix of plant- and animal-based food types, recognising that the [Planetary Health Diet \(PHD\)](#) reflects a dietary pattern framed over days and weeks rather than individual meals.

01.3

Support sustainable and fair value chains.

Collaboratively develop strategies and share costs with other value chain partners to improve production standards aligned with environmental, health, and social justice values. Invest a percentage of purchases into farms transitioning to regenerative agriculture. Demand transparent sourcing in contracts throughout the value chain to uphold worker rights and guarantee livable incomes. Integrate fair value chain initiatives with local social justice efforts, such as improving food sovereignty or reducing poverty.

01.2

Leverage procurement to diversify supply chains.

Increase resilience and mitigate risks, while embracing a diversity of foods (e.g., the “eat your colours” approach) from both global and local suppliers of all scales, including smaller minority-owned suppliers. Support suppliers that value diverse, seasonal, sustainable, and locally produced, and indigenous foods, as well as a diversity in blue food sourcing to increase the resilience of the supply chain. Create demand for regenerative practices.

01.4

Leverage food environment design and hospitality experience to guide eater behaviour.

Recognise that the overall food environment, concept presentation, and hospitality experience all present opportunities to reshape eater attitudes and preferences. Guide eaters towards healthier and more sustainable food choices by offering plant-rich menu items as the default choice. Use enticing and descriptive language to communicate ingredients, and optimise portion sizes to reduce waste.

01.5

Empower your team.

Ensure fair and decent working conditions and incomes for employees. Create programmes and pathways for career advancement. Involve front line staff in menu design and communication to increase engagement with customers. Foster a shared passion for transforming the food sector and food systems among all employees, inspiring collective efforts to reduce food waste and promote healthier, more sustainable, and delicious food choices.

01.7

Create learning networks across businesses of diverse sizes.

Design strategies and develop connections between businesses of all sizes to leverage how companies can support food system transformation and learn from one another. Do not overlook the many single-unit, individual and family-run businesses that form the foundation of the global restaurant and food service sector with greater adaptive capacity to quickly change menus and operations. Through collaboration, impact analysis and technology, share strategies that are effective in these smaller settings, identify what might be brought to scale, and help all operators improve their business outcomes while advancing sustainability and equity across the industry.

01.9

Lead with flavour: Invest in Research and Development (R&D) and culinary training in line with the Planetary Health Diet recommendations.

Draw on the creativity of chefs to lead an industry revolution in culinary R&D that centres on strategies and techniques to enhance deliciousness and the thoughtful use of diverse ingredients. This revolution should emphasise plant-rich meal preparation and food service offerings grounded in culinary science while celebrating the heritage of tradition, plant-rich food cultures from around the world.

01.6

Connect eaters with the broader food system.

Help eaters discover how food choices connect to broader sustainability and social justice issues by transforming dining spaces and everyday food experiences into learning opportunities. Ensure staff are well-equipped to support this transformation through training programmes, while exploring creative strategies for actively engaging eaters. This can include integrating experiences into school meal programs, hosting cooking classes to engage with eaters on healthy meal preparation at home, sharing the stories of farmers behind menu ingredients, inspiring through historical and cultural contexts of regional cuisines.

01.8

Set goals and targets aligned with the latest EAT-Lancet Commission and establish related sector-wide standards.

Align indicators and metrics with the EAT-Lancet Commission as a sector-wide guiding star.

This includes

- i. Co-developing organisational roadmaps to align operations with food waste reduction targets and the most up-to-date science on healthy diets and sustainable, affordable food choices. These roadmaps could include elements covered in this brief.
- ii. Implementing harmonised and transparent data standards and collection to credibly and consistently track progress.

Together, these initiatives foster sector-wide learning, accountability, and a compelling investment case.

SECTION 02

Actions to Stop or Do Differently

Actions currently undertaken by our community that hinder progress towards healthier, more sustainable, and more just food systems and should be stopped or done differently.

02.1

Stop marketing campaigns that promote outsized portions and encourage unhealthy and unsustainable eating habits. Instead, focus on promoting more sustainable and well-portioned healthy meals.

02.2

Stop using volume discounts and other purchasing incentives for unhealthy and unsustainable foods, such as rebates for organisations and oversized combo meals for individual eaters.

02.3

Stop applying universal requirements intended for large corporations to small producers. Instead, develop flexible sourcing approaches that are inclusive of independent operators leading on healthy, sustainable and just practices.

02.4

Stop focusing on short-term cost-cutting measures and instead build long-term strategies that safeguard people and the planet.

02.5

Stop developing menus based on narrow ideas of consumer demand. Instead, lead eaters by proactively expanding delicious menu offerings that include more plant-rich and wholegrain foods, and invest in marketing them to generate demand.

02.6

Stop letting the pursuit of ideal solutions slow progress. Instead, keep ambitions high while embracing progressive changes and phase-based planning, knowing that success builds greater success.

SECTION 03

Unlocks

Asks from this community to other communities that are necessary to overcome systemic barriers to action (“lock-ins”), pointing to opportunities for collaboration.

1. NATIONAL-LEVEL POLICY AND PRACTICE

- A. **Update national dietary guidelines with the most up-to-date science, considering both health and sustainability.** Clearly communicate these guidelines (see [Brazil](#) and [Denmark](#)), with an emphasis on alternative protein sources and optimal daily amounts of protein to address protein overconsumption where this is a reality.
- B. **Regulate on food loss and waste, and modernise food recovery policies towards a reduction in food loss and waste.** This includes assessing the impact of existing food safety regulations to address barriers to enhanced circular food systems.
- C. **Create a “sandbox” for pilot programmes** to test and develop new food recovery technologies and companion policies.
- D. **Raise production standards beyond certification:** mandate natural resource protection, human rights, including decent work, with penalties for violations.
- E. **Create eater incentives for healthy and sustainable purchases,** such as removing or lowering taxes on fruits, nuts, vegetables, and legumes; regulate marketing of food in public spaces.

2. CITY-LEVEL POLICY AND PRACTICE

- A. **Utilise city-level policy to impact procurement.** Develop procurement standards on healthy and sustainable food menus at scale and across food service communities. Collaborate with partners to establish city-wide procurement policies that build demand, such as requiring institutional food service (e.g., school and hospital meals), purchased lunches, or conference meals to comply with the Planetary Health Diet.
- B. **Implement measures to reduce food loss and waste at the municipal level,** such as increasing the availability of composting bins, and developing circular economy plans for regions and sectors within and adjacent to the city.
- C. **Host pilot programmes of cross-sector collaboration** to demonstrate financial, social, and environmental sustainability potential.

3. RESEARCH

- A. **Provide context-specific information on effective nudges and interventions that work with different population segments** (e.g., age groups, geographic locations).
- B. **Develop and test measurement tools to make the financial and business case for dietary shifts.** Provide clear results to show the financial impact of procurement changes towards more plant-rich menus.
- C. **Continue strategic agenda-setting to update the community** with best practices and deliver the most recent science support.

4. VALUE CHAIN BUSINESS COLLABORATION

- A. **Encourage more inclusive collaboration across the food value chain** (e.g., distributors and manufacturers) by supporting engagement with local SMEs that promote healthy, sustainable, and just food systems.

- B. **Co-develop sector-wide full value-chain pre-competitive standards** to align strategies on healthy and sustainable diets, regenerative production, livable wages, and food loss and waste. These standards can serve as a roadmap to unify business goals, and ensure all partners across the value-chain shape procurement practices and supplier engagement.
- C. **Highlight examples of food loss and waste valorisation efforts** from start-up companies to enable scaling or adaptation for local contexts.
- D. **Support campaigns that challenge the status quo and enable change in demand-side perceptions of healthy diets** mobilising popular culture, influencers, and campaigners among others.
- E. **Finance farming practice transitions** towards regenerative agriculture through grants, blended finance and crop insurance, also unlocking procurement and sourcing transitions.

5. SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

- A. **Promote “food as medicine” and “culinary medicine”** to strengthen the link between the science of health and environmental imperatives, and the language of deliciousness that shapes restaurant and food service customer choices.
- B. **Continue to train healthcare professionals in food as medicine, nutrition, and lifestyle medicine** to improve public health and environmental aims.

6. FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

- A. **Repurpose (inter)national subsidies** in support of environmentally sustainable production of under- consumed healthy foods. Subsidise producers of a wide diversity of crops, while halting investments in extensive monoculture production of over-consumed unhealthy foods.
- B. **Mobilise catalytic philanthropic funding to drive change in consumer demand** through large-scale communications campaigns linking food and climate.
- C. **Finance farming practice transitions** (towards regenerative agriculture) through grants, blended finance, and crop insurance, also unlocking procurement and sourcing transitions.

SECTION 04

Next steps

In the year ahead, the co-hosts of the Community of Action and partners will aim to support chefs, restaurants, and food service companies to accelerate progress — further aligning targets, speeding implementation, sharing best practices, and amplifying impact on global stages. We will continue to share knowledge, translate and disseminate findings through existing thought leadership platforms, and drive coordinated efforts across this community.

Where feasible, we will update plans in line with the 2025 EAT-Lancet Commission through refreshed guidance and tools. We will also explore opportunities for collective impact through the Action Brief Priorities

and actively amplify efforts at key global and regional fora, including Menus of Change, Chefs' Manifesto Action Hubs, the African Food Systems Forum, COP30 & COP31, among others.

For more detailed information on how CIA, WBCSD, SDG2 Hub and others will be taking this forward – and how you can join – [click here](#).

SECTION 05

Acknowledgements

This Community for Action is co-hosted by EAT, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) and the SDG2 Advocacy Hub, and curated by Convene.

43 organisations (and 68 individuals) from across the globe contributed to this Action Brief over a period of seven months, participating in at least one dialogue, sharing insights, feedback, and building collective intelligence. This Action Brief echoes their voices.

Contributing organisations include:

Almond Board of California, Areas, Bon Appétit, Copenhagen Municipality, Convene, Culinary Institute of America, Crescendo Foods, EAT, Eat Better By Design, Eat Real, Flora Food Group, Food for Climate League, Good Eating Company, Google Food, Griffith Foods, Growth Regenerative Hospitality, Grupo Bimbo, Health Care Without Harm, HelloFresh, Hyatt APAC, ISS Guckenheimer, Leanpath, Lentils.org, Maxim's Caterers, McDonald's, Menus of Change University Research Collaborative, Modern Restaurant Concepts, Orbisk, Panera Bread, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Restaurant Associates, SDG2 Advocacy Hub, Sodexo, Strawberry Hotels, Sustainable Restaurant Association,

Tilt Collective, UC Davis Health, University of British Columbia, Vanderbilt University Campus Dining, Walt Disney World, WBCSD, Winnow and Zero Foodprint.

The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) is a world-renowned institution dedicated to culinary education, training the next generation of chefs, food professionals, and industry leaders.

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) is a global community of 250+ companies driving sustainability as a core business value. We connect leaders, shape policy, and scale impact to build a net-zero, nature-positive, and equitable future.

The SDG2 Advocacy Hub coordinates global campaigning and advocacy to achieve SDG2: To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030.