

Action Brief for and with Food Retail and Manufacturers

Food retailers and manufacturers are critical agents of change, shaping both supply and demand. They play a central role in informing what food gets produced, how it is marketed, and what ends up on people's plates. With their reach across supply chains and direct influence on consumer choices, they are uniquely positioned to lead the transformation towards healthier, more equitable, and environmentally sustainable food systems.

Achieving this vision requires strong collaboration across the entire food value chain, including partnerships grounded in local contexts, and healthy businesses able to take action.

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.

Overarching actions

01.1

Set targets for diverse, healthy, just, and sustainable product portfolios and sales in line with the Planetary Health Diet (PHD).

Keep a whole-of-plate approach, and focus on rebalancing protein sales to include a healthy combination of plant and animal sources. Pre-competitively share knowledge between retailers and manufacturers on setting whole-store portfolio targets, emphasising the PHD's business case (e.g., cost savings, value adds) for internal buy-in, and emphasising actions tailored to local contexts and challenges. Transparently report and disclose outcomes against these targets.

01.2

Ground business decisions in social justice and human rights.

Accelerate impactful engagements on just transition strategies with food producers in highly impacted sectors (e.g., meat, dairy). Ensure living incomes are paid across the value chain and that workers have access to healthy diets, such as through workers' covenants and workforce nutrition programmes. Work through partnerships and procurement frameworks to support fair outcomes, and expand in-store product offerings of companies with social responsibility, such as those engaged with Fairtrade, B Corp or the Rainforest Alliance.

Actions to increase demand

01.3

Boost availability, visibility, affordability, and appeal of healthy, sustainably produced foods, prioritising plant-rich options produced with sustainable and just practices.

Use strategic placement, portion guidance, marketing, and nudges to make PHD choices prominent in stores and online. Support affordability through targeted promotions and loyalty programmes, and collaborate with suppliers and certifiers for fair pricing. Improve last-mile distribution to underserved areas, and offer tools to reduce waste from perishable items. Expand PHD-aligned products by prioritising health, sustainability, and justice in sourcing, certification, and reformulation, drawing on existing examples.

01.4

Empower consumers to make healthier and more sustainable choices through information and experiences.

Provide clear, simple, and consistent information and guidance to consumers. Recognise that food choice is driven by habit, emotion, convenience and social norms. Therefore, more is required than only information and facts – focus on the better taste, health benefits, convenience, and value. Make healthy and sustainable the appealing default option. Promote new products through in-store tastings, meal plans, and recipes that reflect the PHD. Use smart, targeted marketing to drive engagement and demand. Partner with healthcare professionals to develop a shared strategy that supports behaviour change based on the best available scientific evidence.

Actions to increase supply

01.5

Scale innovations along the value-chain to align with the Planetary Health Diet (PHD), while ensuring equitable access and affordability.

Strengthen collaborations and partnerships across the value chain to develop innovative products, including healthy and sustainable foods that are tasty and appealing. Reformulate everyday products to align with the PHD at multiple price points, and develop other product innovations (e.g., reutilising side streams, hybrid products, biotech solutions). Jointly explore and adopt innovation opportunities between key value-chain actors for on-farm innovation that supports more sustainable practices.

01.7

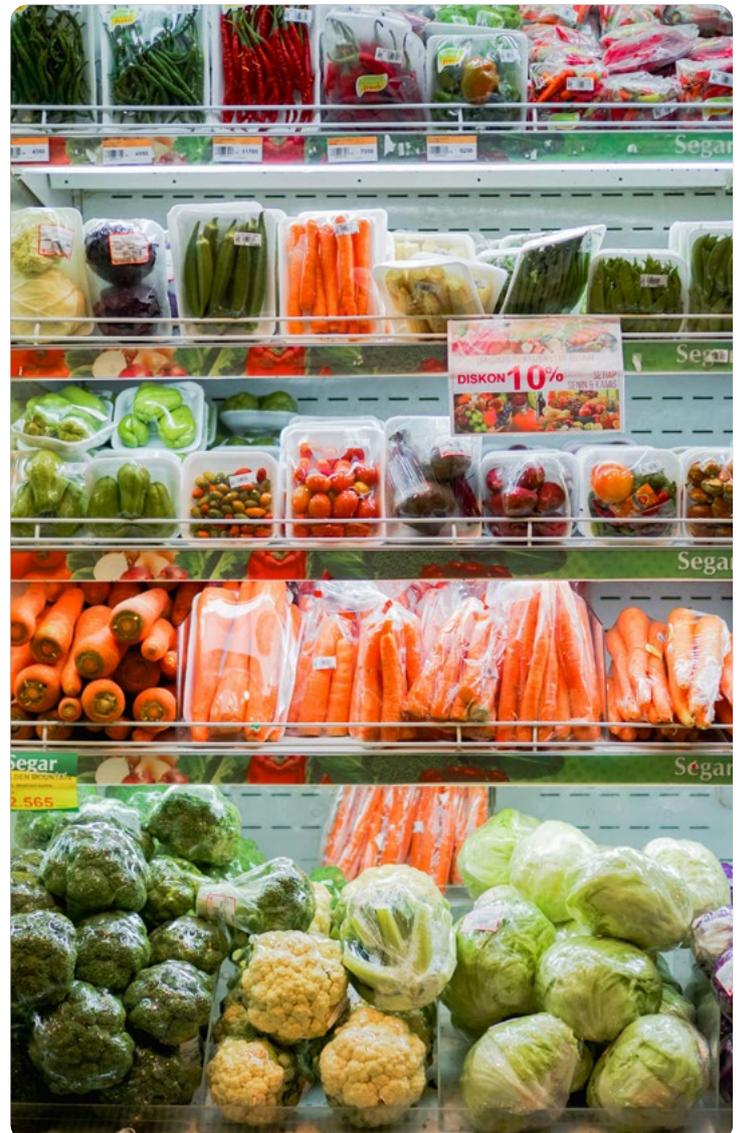
Elevate commitment to food-waste reduction.

Prevent excessive loss of merchantable food and promote circularity through dynamic pricing, timely labels, analysis, and other technologies. Collect and redistribute products close to “best by” dates through donations to local food banks and discounted price promotions. Measure and reduce food waste along the value chain, focusing on where shared commitments can have impact. Jointly advocate for food loss and waste reduction policies and standards, including revisiting cosmetic and size standards for imperfect fruits and vegetables. Add recommended portion sizes to product labels, and increase the availability of bulk-food refill stations in retail stores.

01.6

Implement procurement policies that favour healthier, more just, and environmentally sustainable foods.

Favour producers and suppliers who demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability and socially inclusive practices. Support them with capacity-building, longer-term contracts, and incentive structures. Collaborate with suppliers to transition to more sustainable practices by co-developing financing mechanisms or joint innovation initiatives. Set clear signals to producers and suppliers, and progressively strengthen procurement approaches to prioritise sustainability, nutrition, human rights, and justice criteria.



Enabling actions

01.8

Develop and use collaborative cost-sharing models across the value chain.

Leverage blended finance to enable long-term change. Use tools such as price premiums, co-investment schemes, and capacity-building between farmers, manufacturers, and retailers to support the transition to sustainable and just production systems. Share transition costs by jointly investing in training programmes and co-financing models.

01.10

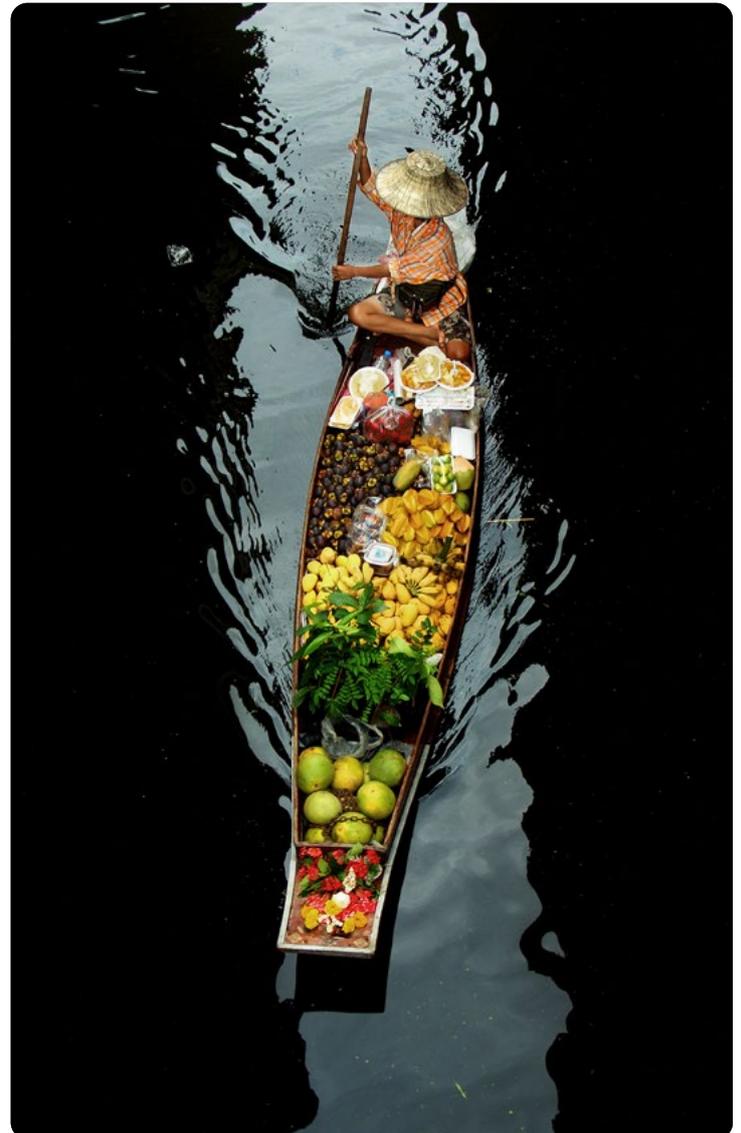
Enable information exchange to drive progress and transparency along the value chain.

Collaborate across the food value chain on aligned indicators and metrics that enable informed decision-making. This should include data for labelling, to support sourcing decisions, to measure sustainability and health outcomes, or to guide reformulation. Adopt common, affordable metrics for sustainable production, covering key indicators such as climate, biodiversity, soil health, water, and social justice. Work with decision-makers and trusted third parties to prioritise sharing non-sensitive data among sectors and to develop clear and practical pathways for data exchange.

01.9

Advocate for fiscal tools and policies that reward best and sustainable practices along the value chain.

Collaborate across the food system to advocate for policies and fiscal measures that support the transition to healthier, more sustainable, and more just food systems. This includes regionally appropriate financial instruments such as tax recalibration, targeted incentives, investment mechanisms, and the repurposing of subsidies to promote healthy, sustainable, and just food production and sales. Ensure that these policies take into account the needs of both farmers and consumers, and that transitions can be sustained over time.



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 making and marketing unhealthy products targeted to children. Increase the availability of nutritious products for children that emphasise healthy and sustainable consumption habits. This shift must be supported by policy measures and coordinated across the industry to ensure a level playing field (see Unlock 1e).

02.2

Stop promotions and marketing that drive overconsumption of less healthy and less sustainable foods. Gradually shift away from strategies that promote unhealthy products high in salt, sugar, and saturated fats, as well as foods with high environmental impacts, such as red meat.

02.3

Stop edible food from going to landfills. Reduce food loss and waste at the source through improved forecasting, storage, handling, and purchasing practices. Edible surplus food should be redistributed to those in need as a first priority. When redistribution isn't possible, prioritise composting, animal feed, or energy recovery over landfills.

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. POLICYMAKERS

We need clear, coherent and harmonised policies based on shared principles that promote social justice, nutrition, environmental, and social sustainability, and contextual feasibility for all value-chain actors, including the most underserved consumer groups.

- A. **Design, implement and promote national dietary guidelines that are culturally appropriate**, address meals and dietary patterns, provide scientific evidence for recommendations, and are PHD-aligned.
- B. **Build incentive programmes to support farmers and suppliers to use regenerative and more sustainable practices**, including transitioning away from fossil fuels.
- C. **Update fiscal systems**, including reducing or eliminating VAT on fruits and vegetables, **to promote healthy, just, and sustainable food**.
- D. **Leverage school meals and other public procurement to promote healthy and sustainable food inspired by the PHD**, reduce unhealthy options, and embed food literacy in educational settings.
- E. **Revisit marketing regulations to protect consumers**, notably children, from less healthy and less sustainable food advertising.
- F. **Revisit disclosure regulations to incorporate information about health and sustainability of product portfolios**.
- G. **Design and implement social programmes that increase the ability for all to purchase healthy types and quantities of sustainably produced foods**, such as a living wage requirement.
- H. **Update food loss and waste policies to promote circular practices and to unlock market access for “unaesthetic” produce**. Revisit food safety risks and standards in reutilisation of food.
- I. **Accelerate research and innovation in crop cultivation**, including vegetables, fruits, legumes, and nuts.
- J. **Foster public-private R&D partnerships to address knowledge gaps and commercialise innovations for alternative proteins**.

2. CHEFS, RESTAURANTS AND FOOD SERVICE

- A. **Provide tasty experiences of the PHD through diverse and creative menus. Communicate the value of the nutritional, environmental, and social benefits to guests**.
- B. **Update procurement practices in line with the PHD** and consider how these factors can be further integrated in contract evaluation.
- C. **Commit to long-term purchasing of healthy and sustainable products in volumes**, creating steady and foreseeable demand to retailers and manufacturers.

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3. CONSUMER AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS
- A. **Communicate information to consumers about opportunities for healthy, sustainable, and just diets.**
 - B. **Advocate for changes that support a shift in consumption patterns aligned with the PHD**, such as increased availability and affordability of healthy and sustainable products of varying price ranges.
 - C. **Advocate for action by policymakers on the unlocks** listed above.
 - D. **Share information about consumer constraints and aspirations with food retailers and manufacturers.**
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4. FINANCE, INVESTORS, AND INSURERS
- A. **Offer sustainable finance mechanisms to food retailers and manufacturers** to enable investments that support healthier, more sustainable, and just diets.
 - B. **Provide fair financing to farmers and suppliers to enable transition** towards regenerative agriculture and other production practices that support healthier, more sustainable, and just diets.
 - C. **Prioritise investments in research, innovation, and scaling-up by directing capital towards R&D in food system innovation.**
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5. ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH
- A. **Establish clear and trusted evidence for elements of health, environmental and social sustainability, and justice that support action by food retailers and manufacturers**, including health impacts of ultra- processed foods, production practices, and pricing models to support accessibility.
 - B. **Share learnings from and build on energy transition funding mechanisms and policy frameworks.**
 - C. **Develop a clearer definition of “healthy and sustainable” to help link products to diets.** Suggest how these criteria could be assessed and develop solutions as needed.
 - D. **Counter false or non-evidence-based claims with clear, science-based messages** in public discourse and media.
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6. HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
- A. **Emphasise the importance of healthy and sustainable diets to patients and the general population with positive framing**, contributing to a wider shift in social norms.

SECTION 04

Next steps

In the year ahead, the co-hosts and partners of the Community for Action will aim to support retailers and manufacturers to accelerate progress; we will continue to share knowledge, translate and disseminate findings into existing thought leadership platforms, and drive coordinated efforts through existing frameworks for food retailers and manufacturers. Where feasible, we will update our plans in line with the 2025 EAT-Lancet Commission through refreshed guidance and tools.

We will also explore the potential for collective impact through the Action Brief priorities and actively amplify efforts at key global and regional fora.

For more detailed information on how WBCSD, CGF and others will be taking this forward – and how businesses and supporting organizations can join – [click here](#).

SECTION 04

Acknowledgements

This Community for Action is co-hosted by EAT, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF), and curated by Convene.

41 organisations (and 66 individuals) from across the globe contributed to this Action Brief over a period of six months, participating in at least one dialogue, sharing insights, feedback, and building collective intelligence. This Action Brief echoes their voices.

Contributing organisations include:

Bel Group, Beijer Institute (Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences), Bühler, Charoen Pokphand Group Co., Coop Genossenschaft, Coop Ostra, Convene, dsm-firmenich, EAT, EDEKA, East of England Co-op, Esselunga, Food for Biodiversity, FrieslandCampina, Givaudan, ICA, Institute of Grocery Distribution, Instacart, International Fresh Produce Association and The Foundation for Fresh

Produce, InterVeg, ITC, KDDC, Madre Brava, Majid Al Futtaim Retail (MAF), Carrefour, Marks & Spencer, Migros Ticaret, Nestlé, Olam Agri, Tetra Pak, The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF), TILT Collective, Too Good To Go, World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA), WBCSD, WWF.

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 Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) is a global, parity-based industry network that unites over 400 consumer goods retailers and manufacturers across 70 countries to drive positive change across the industry.