

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 18 May 2021 10:00 GMT +01:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Exploring the feasibility of developing a shared national accountability and reporting framework for the food industry.
CONVENED BY	Food Foundation, World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA), Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/17372/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	No borders

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE



PARTICIPATION BY GENDER



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP



2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

- This dialogue was organised collaboratively - ATNI, GAIN, WBA and Food Foundation were the four leading organisations. We decided to work together as we all had a footprint in different areas of the world and ensuring that we brought together a diverse group of people from different countries and regions was an important factor if the dialogue is to be successful. - We also involved other stakeholders in the planning process, asking them to review the purpose and then outline for the dialogue to ensure that it would be appropriate and relevant for the LMICs we were hoping to include in the dialogue. - We knew that the subject matter was complex and it was important to present a range of case studies in order to help illustrate types of benchmarking initiatives that had been developed by different organisations.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

- A long and inclusive welcome helped to set the tone for the dialogue by making people feel relaxed whilst at the same time giving people a flavour of the diversity of stakeholders and geographies we had in the 'room'. - In each breakout room we ensured there was a good mix of people from different stakeholders groups and geographical locations so that each discussion was inclusive and diverse - After the plenary we invited Alison Cairns to speak about the UNFSS so that the participants can see how what was discussed in the dialogue will feed into the UNFSS process and build on the existing processes and initiatives that have already been set up by the UNFSS secretariat and wider teams.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

This dialogue was exploring the feasibility of developing a shared national accountability and reporting framework for the food industry. It sought to answer the question: how can emerging initiatives that benchmark the food industry and engage with stakeholders such as government and investors be applied to countries outside of the traditional benchmarking regions of Europe and the USA?

ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- Finance Policy
- Innovation Data & Evidence
- Human rights Governance
- Women & Youth Empowerment Trade-offs
- Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

The dialogue identified a set of common technical challenges around both national and global benchmarking initiatives. Challenges include how we develop standardised metrics and the importance of using metrics that drive change (for instance whether we build on what is already being measured or thinking about new metrics). How data is sourced (for instance independent versus company data) is another common challenge.

Another common challenge was around engagement, who we should be engaging and how to do this in a way that drives change. Key stakeholders to engage are businesses, investors and SMEs. The media are another important stakeholder group. How we involve each of these stakeholder groups and engage with them will produce different outcomes. The difference between 'naming and shaming' and league tables was one example provided.

The dialogue also identified the need and demand to create a global network to further explore the feasibility and practicality of developing a shared approach for monitoring and reporting food businesses nationally and globally.

Global companies behave differently in different countries. Using the same benchmarking approaches in different countries would help to compare companies' performance in different countries and, if there are discrepancies, use this as a way of driving change and subsequently levelling the playing fields between countries in developed and developing countries.

Agreement that there may be a value in developing a set of standard tools that could be applied in different country settings. Individuals came forward in the dialogue to say they would be interested in being part of these discussions going forward.

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KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Breakout room 1:

Benchmarks are useful structures to know what issues & questions we should be asking companies, even in countries like the UK where this is comparatively a lot of info from the countries themselves.

There is a rise of interest in corporate responsibility, so investors need to understand the different trends. There are solid financial gains in health & nutrition for companies and benchmarks can ignite change especially where legislation is lacking.

Firstly, when we create indicators how do we best define sustainability? What is the right balance of indicators in each context and how are they relevant for consumers, investors, regulators? How do we build indicators in a multistakeholder context? How do we know an index will be useful and create positive change? For instance, with economic sustainability we can look at leading or lagging indicators e.g. how many jobs are created – but is this the right indicator? Or is investment in sustainable finance better? How do we create change, how does it speak to our context and how is it globally relevant?

Legislation doesn't support the translation of the policy into practice. The concern in Bangladesh is the policy translation by governments so governments need support from other agencies to do this.

In Egypt the market is full of snack for children that are high in fat, sugar, salt and obesity rates are soaring. The legislative framework and standards and norms for food safety is there, but the infrastructure for application is weak. This is shared in all low- and middle-income countries. I would like very much for Egypt and other African countries to make a survey of acceptability of a benchmarking system to see who would join it. We have working relations with some leading industry players and then the others will follow.

The SUN initiative is integral entry point for benchmarking & improving nutrition in African countries. It is an established relationship of stakeholders committed to health and wellbeing of children, a captive committed community already. If you start with the food producers in Egypt say through the Chamber of Commerce or Food industry associations, you will find a lot of resistance.

How to create greater harmonization? SDG indicators aren't perfect – no animal welfare for instance – then you need to weigh up what the indicator is (in terms of data and whether it's comparable). We don't want to capture the status quo or mislead.

It can be difficult to create indicators when we have to rely on industry best practice for guidance as there is no international standards, e.g. warning labels on foods in Mexico. Some countries oppose regulations or lobby against it but so far there has been some positive responses. Walmart you filter your shopping cart to take out those with warning labels.

ATNI is using government endorsed nutrition portfolio ratings and change analysis in the scoring guidelines for individual companies rather than focusing on the league tables as the end result.

Breakout room 2:

Most of the participants in breakout room 2 represented global benchmarking initiatives. They spent their time synthesising the learning from global initiatives that could be translated into national frameworks:

We need to create stronger links between national govt and benchmarks;

We need to reach different stakeholders and there needs to be more sharing of successes and failures between different benchmarking initiatives;

We need to create more demand for independent, verifiable data. Greater demand for independent data that isn't just provided by companies who are self-reporting;

We recommend a global benchmarking framework that could be adapted in different national contexts;

Breakout room 3:

Having a benchmark alone is not enough, it's about driving change and we need a consistent way of measuring. General agreement that a broad framework would be helpful.

Within LMICs there is a lack of understanding of what is happening at country level and a need to start benchmarking.

We need a globally harmonised framework that records the global impact of farming mechanisms. These need to be measuring based on outcome

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Benchmarking-Initiatives-Discussion-Paper.pdf>