

2.7 Power and accountability

Transforming power dynamics that shape food demand; creating accountability mechanisms that empower governments and civil society to drive change and reward good corporate behavior

What problem is your solution addressing?

Transforming food demand to optimize human well-being, ecological health, and economic prosperity will require major changes in the power dynamics between players in the food system. Simply inserting new solutions into a system that is structured towards the promotion of unhealthy unsustainable diets will result in changes that are unlikely to scale or endure.

To bring about change, government and civil society needs to strengthen their ability to influence action by business. To create mechanics that allow them to hold commercial actors who influence a nations food habits to account for their actions and inactions.

Currently however, 'mechanisms' that foster industry accountability and empower civil society to drive change are weak or missing. For example, there is no set of aligned metrics and targets that have been agreed to track industry progress, there is limited public reporting of such metrics and, key policies that restrict commercial vested interests from influencing food related policy-making are often absent.

How does your solution address the problem?

This solution will implement a range of mechanics that foster accountability for the health and environmental consequences of a company's actions and empower government and civil society to take remedial action. Such mechanism will include:

- A tight set of aligned, evidence-based health and sustainability **targets with associated metrics** that can be used evaluate the performance of different types of companies within the food-demand system (e.g. retailers, caterers, restaurant chains, manufacturers etc.).
- Support to help governments **mandate public reporting** by companies against the key metrics and an associated data system to help monitor and evaluate their progress publicly.
- Engagement with Investors to align the metrics to their loan and credit facilities. This will help re-enforce the metrics and support progressive CEO's who wish to take the lead.
- Policies that **limit industries involvement in policy making** areas which have a conflict of interest (e.g. dietary guidelines). Like how the tobacco industries role in policy on smoking has been approached.
- A forum to **celebrate positive leadership and progress by companies**.
- A structured process and funding mechanic to **engage and empower local civil society** organizations to champion progress within their country.

These changes will be brought together into an 'accountability package' that governments would then be supported to implement, monitor and maintain. Starting first with 10 countries (that would be announced at the summit), we would then adapt, refine and scale around the

world. Ultimately this solution will counter the undermining influence of vested commercial interests and help create an environment within which policies and actions that facilitate positive changes to a nations diet can flourish.

Is this a new solution or an existing solution that needs scaling?

This is a new solution but builds on a number of separate existing solutions that need to bring together and scaled.

Which organization/s, institution/s or group of individuals are associated with the solution?

Food Foundation, NCD Alliance, World Benchmarking Alliance, World Resources Institute, Chatham House.

If selected as a game-changing solution, how will you leverage the UN Food Systems Summit to scale your solution?

The UN FSS provides a unique opportunity to (a) bring together key health and sustainability NGO's together to start working upon an aligned set of metrics and associated targets, (b) get commitments from a number of countries in piloting the implementation of such a package of accountability metrics, (c) get commitments from some more forward thinking companies to adopt and report against the metrics and targets, (d) energize a wide range of civil society organizations around this solution to foster future wider adoption.

Is this idea applicable to a particular geography, demography, landscape or other type of setting (e.g. high- or low-income countries, aquaculture)? If so, please specify.

This has global applicability.

Who are the main actors that would put this action into place?

Policymakers (government), civil society organizations, business.

Source and process

This solution is based on conversations within Workstream 2. It builds upon a range of solutions submitted through the solution sourcing process run by Workstream 2.

