

1.3 Maximizing the future of consumer information for healthy diets from sustainable production systems

What problem is your proposition addressing?

Consumers across the world are increasingly recognizing the value of healthy diets and [expressing a willingness](#) to change their shopping habits to reduce environmental impact. These consumers are [being let down](#) by [ineffective consumer information](#). To be able to act on their good intentions, they require [reliable, relevant, clear, transparent, and accessible](#) information on nutrition and sustainability. Currently, this is rarely available. The biggest investment in consumer information comes from companies in the form of marketing, which has the potential to be [a force for change](#), but must become fit for a sustainable and healthy future.

How does your proposition address the problem?

We need to radically rethink how businesses engage with and inform consumers, as well as the role of regulatory standards for marketing, in order to build a marketplace in which responsibility for healthy and sustainable consumption is shared more evenly between stakeholders, and in which consumers are empowered to make better choices.

There are four key levers for achieving this transformation:

1. Expand and enhance government regulation of marketing, setting clear standards on [transparency](#), [sustainability claims](#), and the targeting of [vulnerable consumers](#).
2. Generate [new marketing tools and incentives](#), replacing traditional techniques with an approach that centers the creation of value for people and planet.
3. [Standardize](#) and [streamline](#) product labelling, to provide straightforward and independently-verified information on food products.
4. Engage and empower consumers to [shape the future](#) of marketing and consumer information, for instance by guaranteeing [ownership of their data](#), and creating mechanisms for the enforcement of [consumer rights](#).

Improving consumer information alone is not enough to deliver healthy and sustainable consumption but is a crucial step that will create momentum for changes earlier in the value chain and inspire innovation from businesses.

UNFSS brings together representatives from government, the private sector, and consumer advocacy, all of whom must buy in to this transformation if it is to be successfully implemented. The summit will provide an opportunity for (1) governments to learn about best existing practices in the regulation of marketing, and to commit to [work with consumer advocates](#) to shape future legislation; (2) private companies to both share expertise and learn from others about new marketing tools and incentives, and also to commit to the realignment of marketing practices; (3) the advancement of the conversation on product labelling, bringing stakeholders from across the world and across all sectors together, to create a framework for the [standardization and streamlining](#) of labelling practices; (4) the sharing of best practices in the enforcement of [consumer rights](#), leading to government commitments, as well as connecting consumer advocates at national and international level with donors.

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

New solution

Which organisation/s, institution/s or groups of individuals are associated with the solution?

[Consumers International](#), along with its membership of 200 consumer advocacy organizations across more than 100 countries. Consumers International is also co-lead of the UNEP One Planet Network's [Consumer Information Programme](#) (CI-SCP), which would be mobilized in support of the solution. We would also create a coalition of leaders from across business and government to explore this issue and build together.

What is the scientific evidence that supports your proposition?

The need to transform consumer information and marketing is clearly demonstrated by evidence that poor quality information is a barrier to healthy and sustainable choices; that existing marketing practices represent a missed opportunity to improve consumer information; and that there is strong consumer demand for clearer and better-quality information.

Each of the four levers identified by this solution draw on both research into shifting consumption patterns, and on the practical experiences of consumer advocates from around the world, who are best-placed to identify which solutions are most effective in engaging and empowering consumers. References to examples of evidence on both problem and solution are included within the proposition sections.

Is this idea applicable to a particular geography, demography, landscape, or other type of setting?

The impact of improving consumer information will be felt most strongly in higher-income contexts where consumers have more capacity to make purchasing decisions based on health and sustainability, but these solutions will also be of benefit to lower-income contexts, where consumer information is currently weakest.

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

National governments, private companies, consumer advocates, individual consumers

Source and process

- Helena Leurent – Director General of Consumers International, AT2 leadership team member
- Consumers International's UNFSS Task Force, comprising representatives from: [Consumer VOICE \(India\)](#), [Rwanda Consumer's Rights Protection Organization](#), [Forbrukerrådet \(Norway\)](#), [Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group \(India\)](#), [Consumentenbond \(Netherlands\)](#), [El Poder del Consumidor \(Mexico\)](#), [Instituto Brasileiro de Defesa do Consumidor \(Brazil\)](#), [Which? \(UK\)](#), [Consumers Lebanon](#), [Federacja Konsumentów \(Poland\)](#), and more