



## ACCESS TO NUTRITION INITIATIVE

### Global Access to Nutrition Index 2021 calls for food industry to urgently address nutrition gap in the COVID-19 era

*The fourth Index and Ranking shows fragmented results across the industry over the last three years, in contributions to tackle malnutrition*

**Utrecht, The Netherlands; 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021** – Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI) has launched its 2021 Global Index, assessing the world's largest global food and beverage manufacturers and their contributions to addressing malnutrition. The Index ranked 25 of the world's largest food and beverage manufacturers and, while some companies have shown significant progress since its last iteration in 2018, on average, the industry has only made small improvements. With progress from the top 10 ranking manufacturers seemingly slowing down, ATNI urgently calls on companies to step up their efforts to tackle some of the world's toughest nutrition challenges.

The two vital [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) related to nutrition are:

- *SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security, and improve nutrition.*
- *SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all.*

Malnutrition in any form affects every county in the world, [contributing towards millions of deaths](#) and people at risk of diet related diseases. In 2019, [690 million people \(8.9% of the global population\)](#) were considered undernourished, and with the economic effects of COVID-19 we're seeing even more people experiencing extreme poverty and the consequences of overweight and diet-related diseases. The Index has revealed the growing importance of companies making healthy food affordable and accessible in all markets, particularly for consumers at risk such as those coming from low-income households and those that lack physical access to nutritious food.

**FCDO Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas, Wendy Morton** said: *"We welcome the launch of this year's Index, particularly as COVID-19 has worsened levels of malnutrition and the availability of food globally. We have a unique opportunity to address this in ways that benefit everyone. We must hold the world's biggest food and beverage companies to account to help speed up our global recovery from the pandemic. The food industry has a huge role to play in making nutritious foods more accessible and affordable, in particular for developing countries."*

As part of its fourth comprehensive assessment, the Index ranked 25 food and beverage manufacturers worldwide (see final ranking graph below) including the top five ranking companies **Nestlé, Unilever, FrieslandCampina, Danone** and **Arla**. All companies were assessed on their commitments, practices, and disclosure – with regards to governance and management, the production and distribution of healthy, affordable, accessible products, and how companies influence consumer choices and behavior.

*"Action and accountability are the only ways we are going to ensure our mission that no one goes to bed hungry, and everyone has access to a healthy and affordable diet that has all the nutrients needed to grow and develop fully, said Inge Kauer, Executive Director of ATNI. "Despite some progress shown by the 2021 Global Index, companies need to prioritize nutrition and put in place stronger commitments to improve food systems and tackling malnutrition, on a global level. 2021 as the Nutrition for Growth Year of Action, is the time for food and beverage manufacturers to take bold steps towards healthier diets for everyone, everywhere."*

### Results and Rankings

The Global Index 2021 is the only independent assessment of the extent to which the world's biggest food and beverage manufacturers contribute to addressing malnutrition in all its forms: **overweight/obesity, undernutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies**. It scores and ranks companies based on their nutrition-related commitments and policies, practices and disclosure across seven categories: governance, products, accessibility, marketing, lifestyles, labeling and engagement. It also assessed the healthiness of companies' product portfolios using the Health Star Rating (HSR) model, and it includes an assessment of baby food companies on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes.

Overall, the 2021 results show that companies, need to step up their efforts to encourage healthier diets for all. The average score remained the same as 2018 at 3.3 out of 10. When only taking into consideration the 22 companies that were assessed in both 2018 and 2021, the average score is 3.6.

The 10 leading companies, except for Arla, scored lower than in the 2018 iteration, while most companies in the middle and lower rankings scored slightly higher. It shows too that the leading companies seem to have slowed down when it comes to improving nutrition.

*Key results include:*

- **Nestlé led the 2021 ranking** with a score of 6.7 out of 10. The company achieved a top-3 rank in all categories of the Index and ranked first on 'Governance', and 'Engagement'. **Unilever came second** with 6.3, and **FrieslandCampina third** with 5.9. **Arla** showed a big improvement from 3.3 in 2018 to 5.1 in 2021, largely because of a new labeling policy, responsible marketing policies, and an improvement in healthiness of its product portfolio. **Meiji** rose four places in the Index partially due to incorporation of a nutrition strategy in its CSR vision and new policies aimed at marketing to children and labeling.
- **Only 31% of products met the independent health standard** (a HSR of 3.5 stars or more). This equates to 11,797 of the 38,176 distinct products sold by the 25 companies globally
- **Nine companies improved the average HSR of their products** between 2018 and 2021. But, **just five companies were found to have half or more of their products meet the healthy threshold** of 3.5 stars
- **13 of the 25 companies included improved their score in nutritional governance**, reflecting strengthened nutrition policies and management systems
- **Fourteen companies apply some form of company-specific nutrient profiling model (NPM)** to monitor the healthiness of their products, while **19 companies make commitments on the (re)formulation of products** at nutrient level.
- **Nine companies**, four more than in 2018, indicate that their **approach to the fortification of products**, to help address undernutrition, is **based on international guidance**.
- This index shows **12 companies disclose lobbying positions on important nutrition topics**, whereas, in 2018, only two companies did so (notably on labeling and health claims regulation)
- In the BMS/CF Index 2021, three of the six companies assessed increased their scores from the 2018 Index. **Danone and Nestlé retained first and second place on the BMS/CF Index respectively**, with Kraft Heinz in third. For the 2021 BMS/CF Index, click [here](#).

Interestingly, companies that scored highly on governance tended to score better across other categories too which suggests that nutrition activities are likely to be better sustained where commitment starts at the top, integrated into core business strategy and publicly and comprehensively reported on.

The 2021 Global Index not only gives each company a score rating, but it highlights clear, actionable recommendations in scorecards that will enable companies to implement positive change towards tackling malnutrition, locally and globally.

**Kauer concluded,** *“As the 25 largest food and beverage manufacturers, each must take responsibility to deliver healthy product offerings to consumers across the globe and not leave nutrition behind. That’s no small task – but it’s one that requires action urgently if we are to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals to end world hunger and ensure good health and well-being. We’ve seen the fragility in supply chains in the last three years, but we’ve also seen some companies using this as an opportunity to innovate. With an increasing demand from consumers for healthy products, there is an opportunity for manufacturers to take on this new-found responsibility, to use the new post-COVID-19 reality to enable healthier diets for all.”*

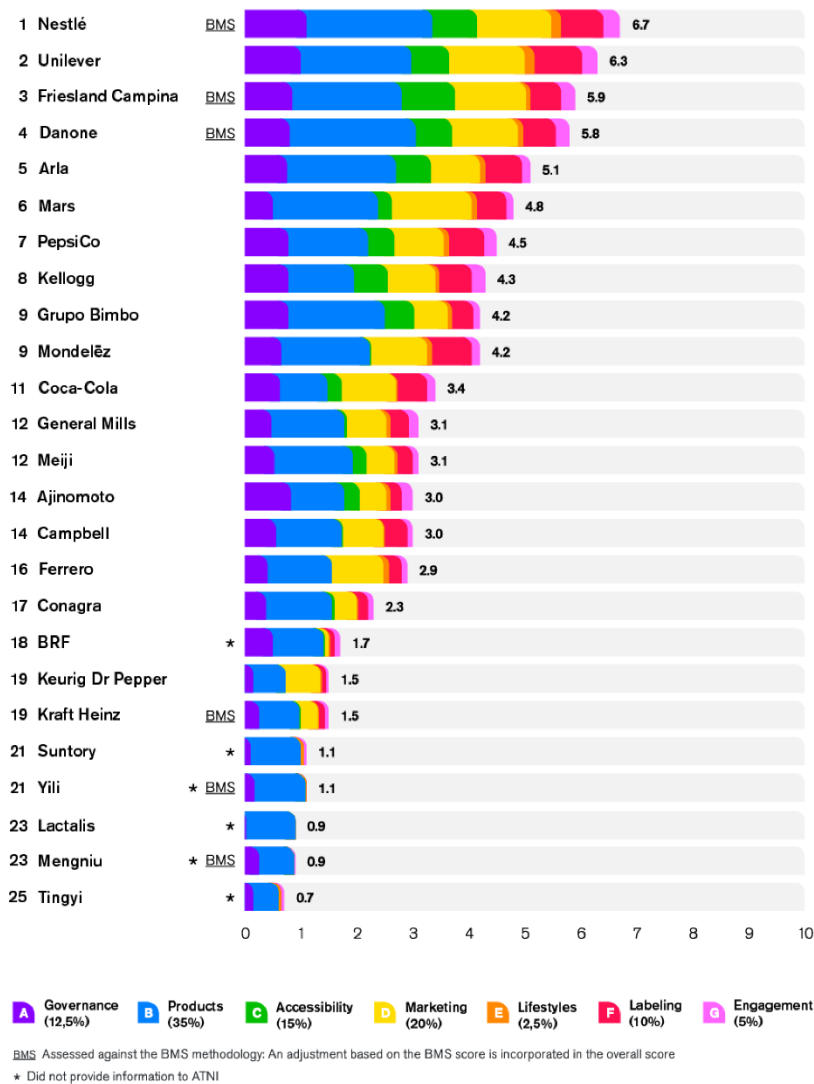
The full report can be found [here](#).

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NOTES TO EDITORS



## Global Index 2021 Final Ranking



### About Access to Nutrition Initiative:

ATNI is an independent, not-for-profit organization established in 2013. It publishes independent, comprehensive analysis and commentary on companies' efforts to improve consumers' access to nutritious foods and beverages, both globally and within specific markets. Assessing producers of breast-milk substitutes and complementary foods is an integral part of ATNI's work. In the course of its research, ATNI collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders, including the investment community, to ensure that its Indexes and reports are a useful tool as they engage with and invest in companies.

