Global Index 2021

General Mills

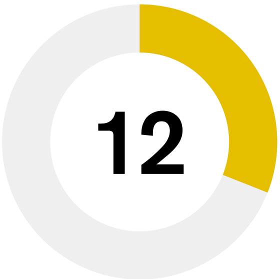
Product categories assessed
Baked Goods|Breakfast Cereals|Dairy|Ice Cream and Frozen Desserts|Ready Meals|Rice, Pasta and Noodles|Sauces, Dressings, Condiments|Soup|Sweet Spreads|Sweet Biscuits, Snack Bars and Fruit Snacks

Percentage of company global sales covered by Product Profile assessment
65-70%

Headquarters
U.S.

Number of employees
40000

Type of ownership
Public



Rank 12 / Score 3.1

Rank 15 (2018)

Product Profile [1]

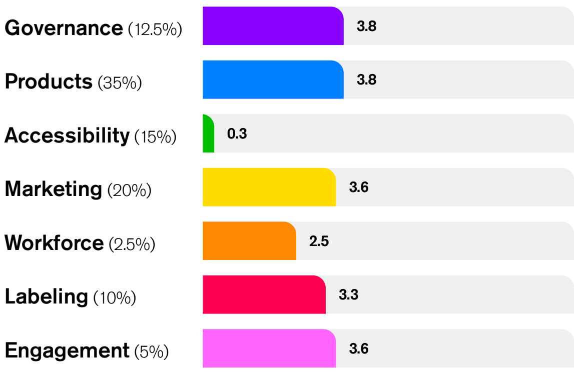
Rank 12 / Score 4.5

Rank 9 (2018) [2]

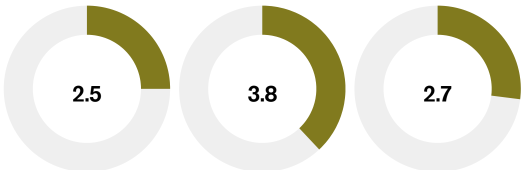
Important:
The findings of this Index regarding companies' performance rely to a large extent on information shared by companies, in addition to information that is available in the public domain. Several factors beyond the companies' control may impact the availability of information such as differences in disclosure requirements among countries or capacity constraints within companies, amongst others the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, in the case of limited or no engagement by such companies, this Index may not represent the full extent of their efforts.

Corporate Profile

Rank 12 Score 3.1



Commitment Performance Disclosure



The bar graph to the left shows company performance across the seven Index categories, which are key topic areas of assessment, and scores are shown for each category. The circles above provide an alternate view on the company's overall results, showing the score per indicator type. The Commitment, Performance, Disclosure score only applies to category scores and not to the BMS/CF Assessment.

Main areas of strength

● SCORES AND RANKS: The company's score has increased from 2.3 in 2018 to 3.1. Accordingly, its rank has increased from 15th place to 12th. This increase reflects significant improvements in their Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM), responsible marketing policy, labelling policy and lobbying disclosure.

● GOVERNANCE: As of 2020, General Mills has formally set out on its website how it seeks to address various forms of malnutrition. For example, it commits to offering more low-calorie and portion control options, alongside more scientific communication, in order to address obesity. It also commits to addressing cardiovascular diseases by delivering vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy in its product portfolio. The company has an emphasis on nutrient-dense foods, like fortified cereals, low-fat and non-fat yogurts, and whole grain granola bars, to deliver beneficial nutrients (such as vitamins, minerals, protein and/or fiber) to its consumers, while balancing nutrients to limit those such as sodium, sugar, and saturated fat. The company shows that it uses data from public health authorities in the US to inform its strategy, especially in relation to fortification.

● PRODUCTS: In 2019, the company moved beyond its US-specific 'Health Metric' criteria and introduced a new health assessment system, 'Nutrition-Forward Foods', which now applies to its global portfolio. To qualify, a product must meet one of two conditions: either 1) provide at least eight grams of whole grain, or half a serving fruit, vegetables, low-/non-fat dairy, or nuts/seeds per labelled serving; or 2) meet the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 'Healthy' criteria. The company discloses on its website that, in 2020, 43 percent of its global sales in volume met either one of these criteria. The second condition is particularly commendable, since it aligns with a government-endorsed Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) and assesses both positive and negative nutrients. That said, while the first condition, formulate by the company, reflects the the company's emphasis on nutrient-density and whole foods, it lacks a threshold for negative nutrients.

● MARKETING: As in 2018, General Mills does not advertise products to children under 12 that do not meet the relevant self-regulatory programs' criteria in their respective markets, such as the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) criteria in the US and EU Pledge in Europe. They commit not to advertise such products on media where children under 12 represent 30 percent or more of an audience, utilizing various tools when it comes to digital media such as age screening, reviewing age-related data, and assessing the nature of third-party websites. The company also commits not to advertise in primary or secondary schools or advertise to children under the age of six.

● LIFESTYLES: The company supports several community programs addressing health and nutrition, cooking and physical fitness – in Minneapolis and Buffalo in the US, and Toronto in Canada. They are designed and co-implemented with local CSOs that have relevant expertise to ensure they meet the needs of local residents and

Priority areas for improvement

● GOVERNANCE: While General Mills has a commercial strategy for addressing better nutrition for the general consumer, limited evidence was found of the company seeking to address the needs of priority populations at risk of malnutrition as defined by relevant health and/or social care authorities. The company is encouraged to engage in market research to assess unmet needs of priority populations in all markets where it is active, and conduct a strategic review of the commercial opportunities in addressing them. While the company publicly discloses that its CEO has ultimate responsibility for its Health and Nutrition strategy, it does not link remuneration arrangements to performance on nutrition targets or objectives. General Mills is encouraged to develop concrete accountability arrangements for the implementation of the company's nutrition strategy, including for its efforts to address undernutrition and/or micronutrient deficiencies and improving the affordability and availability of its healthy products.

● PRODUCTS: Despite committing to "continue to improve the health profile of US retail products", the company has not set any targets for reducing levels of sodium, saturated fat, and added sugar/calories, or to increase positive ingredients like fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes (FVNL), and whole grains. The company is encouraged to set SMART targets that cover all relevant product categories and nutrients of concern relevant to their product portfolio. It is important that product formulation and reformulation are addressed comprehensively at this level.

● PRODUCTS: While the 'Nutrition-forward Foods' criteria is an improvement on the company's previous system of defining 'healthy', there remains room for further progression. General Mills' requirements regarding whole grains, fruit, vegetables, low-/non-fat dairy, and nuts/seeds content do not stipulate a limit on 'negative nutrients'; meaning that products high in sodium, saturated fat, or added sugar can still be considered a 'nutrition-forward food' by the company's definition. Secondly, the company could consider ensuring that it only fortifies products that meet its nutrition criteria (with limits on negative nutrients).

● ACCESSIBILITY: General Mills does not have a clear commitment or strategy to improve the affordability and accessibility of its healthy products (i.e., 'Nutrition-Forward Foods'), especially for low-income groups and priority populations, beyond participation in US federal subsidy programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The company is encouraged to make companywide public commitments on addressing the affordability of its healthy products (according to objective nutrition criteria) and to develop concrete strategies with objective, SMART targets to reach consumers – especially those living in poor socio-economic conditions and food deserts, across all markets where the company operates, and not only in the US.

participants. To assess the programs' impact, evaluations are undertaken either by the company itself or third parties involved in the project.

● LABELING: General Mills has improved on its labelling commitments since 2018. The company now commits to show more nutrients in a numeric format, providing the percentage Guideline Daily Amount. The company has expanded the rollout of its front-of-pack (FOP) and back-of-pack (BOP) labeling commitments to more markets, with FOP labeling now covering Australia, Europe and the US, and more than 90 percent of its products globally.

● ENGAGEMENT: General Mills has significantly improved disclosure on its lobbying related to nutrition – publishing a web page describing numerous examples of its engagement with the US government (at both Federal and State levels) in relation to various nutrition-related subjects, with links to relevant documentation. These include school feeding programs and addressing food insecure communities; supporting strong Dietary Guidelines for Americans and redefining the official FDA 'healthy' definition; and labelling and marketing. The company is one of only three to publicly disclose a commentary on their lobbying measures to prevent and address all forms of malnutrition, and state that it lobbies in support of responsible marketing legislation in the US. The company is also one of four assessed in this Index to have effective management systems in place to manage and control their lobbying: such as an internal whistleblowing mechanism, 'Speak Up'; Board oversight of lobbying positions, processes and practices through a Public Responsibility Committee; and internal audits of lobbying activities, shown via a 'compliance statement'. General Mills has a formal panel of experts in place – the Bell Institute Health & Nutrition Council – consisting of a range of medical professionals and academics, who provide input on the company's strategies, policies and research programs to prevent and address obesity and diet-related chronic diseases. In addition, the company actively engages with the Obesity Round Table and Portion Balance Coalition on this subject.

● MARKETING: Similarly to 2018, General Mills is encouraged to publish its policy on responsible marketing to all consumers, clearly indicating which media are covered. It could also consider pledging to adhere to the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Framework and commission annual independent audits on compliance with its policy. The company is encouraged to improve its advertising policy by adopting a more stringent and consistent global approach, rather than varying restrictions by market. For example, it could apply the CFBAI criteria for marketing products globally, or only advertise products meeting World Health Organization (WHO) regional standards.

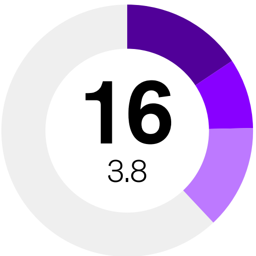
● LIFESTYLES: While the company provides lactation rooms for new mothers returning to work, and fridges for storing breastmilk, in its Twin Cities office locations in its home market, the company is encouraged to expand these provisions to all its offices. It is also recommended to commit to allowing breastfeeding mothers breaks to express breastmilk and provide functional or flexible working arrangements to support them. ATNI advises this be published in a formal policy.

● LABELING: As in 2018, General Mills is advised to commit to international guidelines regarding the use of health and nutrition claims, or have a policy to determine whether products can carry claims in markets where nutrition and health claims are not regulated. The company is encouraged to establish a commitment to follow Codex guidance with regard to health/nutrition claims in markets where national regulatory systems are weaker than the latter, or absent entirely. Best practice would include tracking and disclosing the percentage of products carrying health and/or nutrition claims in all markets.

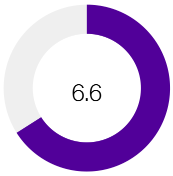
● ENGAGEMENT: The company engages with several CSOs, such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) and Portion Control Alliance, and academic institutions. However, it is encouraged to actively engage with a wider range of stakeholders, both local and international, and develop a well-structured and focused stakeholder engagement strategy to improve the development of the company's nutrition strategies, policies, or programs.

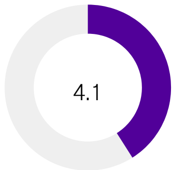
Category Analysis

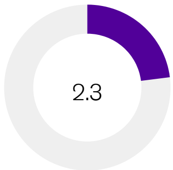
Governance



Commitment | Performance | Disclosure



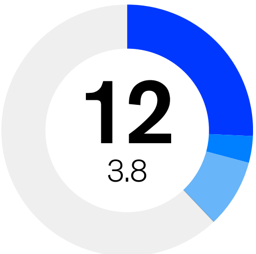




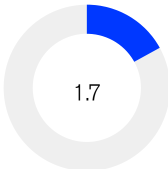
The big circle on the left represents the company result for this Index category, showing the rank out of 25 and the score below it. The smaller circles above indicate company's scores on the three types of indicators.

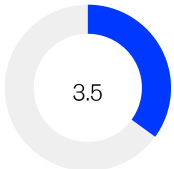
- A1 Nutrition strategy
- A2 Nutrition management
- A3 Reporting quality

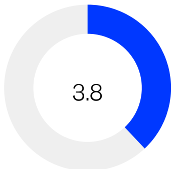
Products



Commitment | Performance | Disclosure







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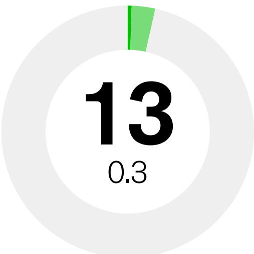
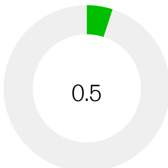
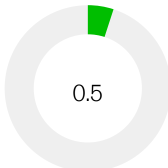
- B1 Product Profile
- B2 Product formulation
- B3 Defining healthy products

Accessibility



Commitment | Performance | Disclosure





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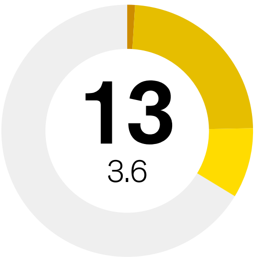
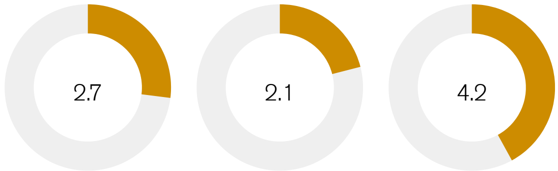
- C1 Product pricing

Product distribution

Marketing



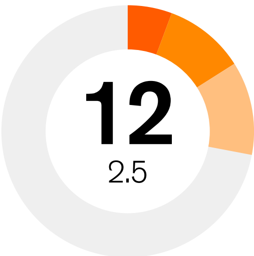
Commitment | Performance | Disclosure



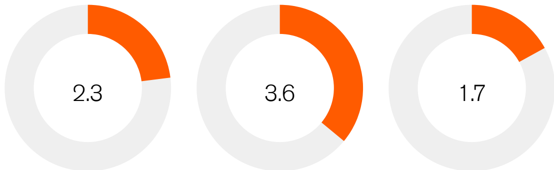
The big circle on the left represents the company result for this Index category, showing the rank out of 25 and the score below it. The smaller circles above indicate company's scores on the three types of indicators.

- D1 Marketing policy
- D2 Marketing to children
- D3 Auditing and compliance

Workforce



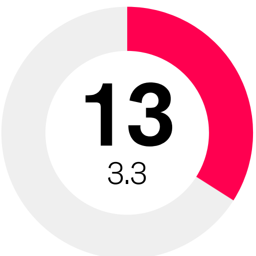
Commitment | Performance | Disclosure



The big circle on the left represents the company result for this Index category, showing the rank out of 25 and the score below it. The smaller circles above indicate company's scores on the three types of indicators.

- E1 Employee health
- E2 Breastfeeding support
- E3 Consumer health

Labeling



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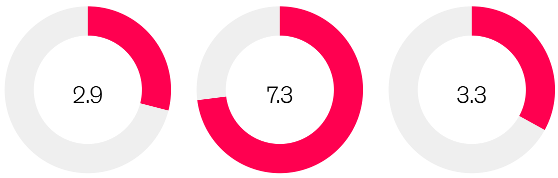
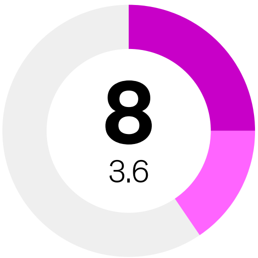
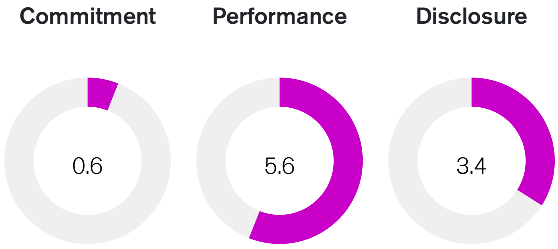


The big circle on the left represents the company result for this Index category, showing the rank out of 25 and the score below it. The smaller circles above indicate company's scores on the three types of indicators.

- F1 Product labeling
- F2 Claims

Engagement





G1 Influencing policymakers

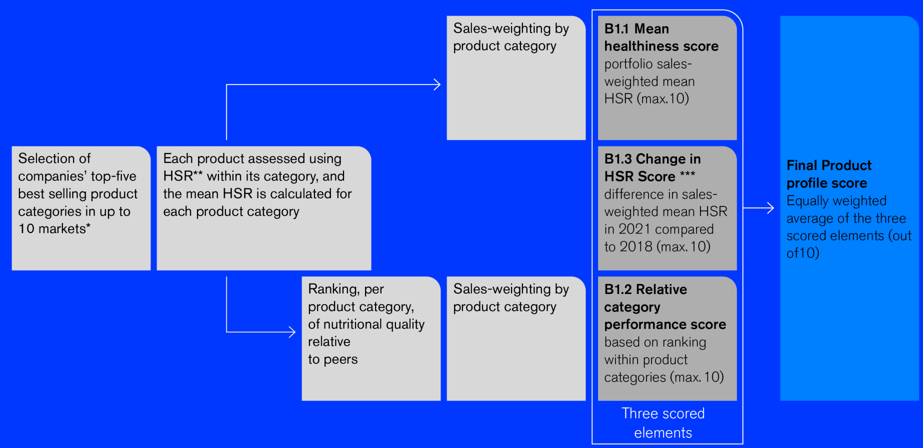
G2 Stakeholder engagement

The big circle on the left represents the company result for this Index category, showing the rank out of 25 and the score below it. The smaller circles above indicate company's scores on the three types of indicators.

Detailed Product Profile Results [3]

12

Rank 12 / Score 4.5



*Analysis based on each company's five best-selling categories in up to 10 selected markets that together cover at least 50% of their global retail sales. Based on data derived from the Euromonitor International's 2020 industry publications of; Packaged Food, Hot Drinks and Soft Drinks.
**Health Star Rating
***This applies only to companies previously assessed in the Global Index 2018 Products Profile and only includes countries which were common to both Product Profiles in 2018 and 2021. Companies are also excluded from this scored element if overlapping countries account for less than 5% of their estimated retail sales in 2019.

General Mills has been assessed for the second time in the Global Index Product Profile. In the previous assessment, nine of the company's markets were selected, and a total of 1542 products analyzed – accounting for approximately 55-60% of global retail sales in 2017, excluding baby foods, plain tea, and coffee. In this Index, a total of 2578 products have been analyzed across 10 of the company's major markets. Products from the top five best-selling product categories within each market are included. In 2019, these products accounted for 65-70% of the company's global retail sales, excluding baby foods, plain tea, and coffee.

Canada is a new country included in this iteration. In 2018, a total of 9 product categories were covered by the assessment, compared to 10 categories in 2021. Products form the 'Soup' and 'Sweets' categories are assessed in 2021 but were not in 2018. Whereas products from the 'Processed Meat and Seafood' category was assessed in 2018, but is not in 2021.

In this Product Profile assessment, General Mills's scores 5.5 out of 10 (B1.1) in the mean healthiness element, 6.1 out of 10 (B1.2) for the relative healthiness of its products within categories compared to peers, and 2 out of 10 (B1.3) for changes in nutritional quality (mean HSR) over time. This results in General Mills obtaining an overall score of 4.5 out of 10 and ranking 12 out of 25 in the Product Profile.

B1.1 Portfolio-level Results

Average HSR (out of 5 stars) (sales-weighted)	10 Countries included	Range of global sales included [4]	Healthy products (HSR)				Products suitable to market to children (WHO regional models) - UNSCORED		
2.8	Australia, Canada, China, India, Hong Kong, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, UK, USA	65-70%	No. products assessed	% products healthy (≥3.5 stars)	% retail sales healthy 2019 (≥3.5 stars) – assessed countries only	% estimated global retail sales healthy 2019 (≥3.5 stars) [5]	No. products assessed	% products suitable	% sales from suitable
			2578	36%	29%	36%	2586	14%	8%

- A total of 2578 products manufactured by General Mills, sold in 10 countries, covering 10 product categories, were included in this Product Profile (baby foods, plain tea and coffee were not assessed). The company's sales-weighted mean HSR is 2.8 out of 5. ATNI turns this value into a score between 0 and 10, resulting in a mean healthiness score of 5.5 out of 10 for General Mills. The company ranks 9 out of 25 companies in this first scored element (B1.1).
- Overall, 36% of distinct products assessed were found to meet the HSR healthy threshold (HSR >=3.5). Together, these products accounted for an estimated 29% of Nestle's retail sales of packaged food and beverages 2019 in the selected markets (excluding baby food, plain tea, and coffee). Assuming the products and markets included in the assessment are representative of the company's overall global sales, ATNI estimates the company derived approximately 36% of its global retail sales from healthy products in 2019.

WHO nutrient profiling models (unscored): Only 14% of products assessed were found to be of sufficient nutritional quality to market to children, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) regional nutrient profiling models. These products were estimated to generate 8% of the company's sales in 2019. More information on this part of the assessment can be found in the Marketing section (Category D) of the Index.

B1.2. Product Category Results

	No. products analyzed	% products healthy (HSR>=3.5)	Company mean HSR	Mean HSR for all companies selling this product category	Company performance (rank in mean HSR compared to peers selling products in the same category) [6]
Baked Goods	215	6%	1.5	2	6th out of 9
Ice Cream and Frozen Desserts	134	1%	1.8	2	6th out of 7
Sweet Spreads	3	0%	1.2	2.2	4th out of 5
Breakfast Cereals	370	42%	3.1	3.5	5th out of 6
Sweet Biscuits, Snack Bars and Fruit Snacks	627	17%	2.4	1.8	1st out of 8
Dairy	671	67%	3.5	2.9	2nd out of 18
Ready Meals	404	15%	2.6	3	8th out of 9
Rice, Pasta and Noodles	22	91%	3.7	2.4	1st out of 6
Sauces, Dressings and Condiments	32	78%	3.5	2.5	2nd out of 11
Soup	100	88%	3.5	2.5	2nd out of 8

▪ For General Mills, 'Rice, Pasta and Noodles' was the best performing category, where a total of 22 products analyzed obtained mean HSR of 3.7 out of 5. 'Sweet spreads' (1.2) had the lowest mean HSR of all product categories included for General Mills.

▪ For five out of the 10 categories assessed, General Mills' products perform equal to or better than the mean HSR of companies selling products in the same categories. The company performs best compared to peers in the following product categories; 'Rice, Pasta and Noodles', 'Sauces, Dressings and Condiments', and 'Soups'.

▪ General Mills scores 6.1 out of 10 in this second scored element (B1.2) and ranks 15 out of 25 companies. This is based on its ranking compared to peers within the 16 categories, using the scoring system set out in ATNI's methodology.

B1.3. Change in mean HSR

	No. of products analyzed in 2018	No. of products analyzed in 2021	Sales weighted mean HSR 2018	Sales weighted mean HSR 2021
Australia	84	203	3.5	3.5
China	73	156	2.5	2.7
Hong Kong	45	85	2	2.3
India	21	46	2	1.7
Mexico	86	119	2.3	2.4
New Zealand	42	53	2.7	3.8
South Africa	12	21	2.7	3.4
UK	193	232	2.9	2.9
USA	986	1180	2.6	2.7
TOTAL	1542	2095	2.6	2.7

▪ General Mills showed a slight increase in mean HSR between the 2018 and 2021 Product Profiles (mean HSR=2.6 to 2.7). The change in HSR score only takes into account the nine countries included in both 2018 and 2021 assessments. For General Mills, the slight increase in mean HSR is likely attributed to a few category changes. For example, a decrease in proportion of sales deriving from the 'Dairy' category and a increase in those deriving from 'Ready Meals', the 'Baked Goods' category being replaced by the 'Soup' category, and the replacement of the 'Breakfast cereals' category with the 'Baked Goods' category in the UK.

▪ Adjusting scores by country sales weighted estimates (which gives more weight to company's largest markets), General Mills achieves an increase of 0.1 in mean HSR between 2018 and 2021, resulting in a score of 2 out of 10 on this element using the scoring system set out in ATNI's methodology.

Full Product Profile report: https://new-l40rlzsq.accesstonutrition.org/app/uploads/2021/06/GI_Global-Index_TGI-product-profile_2021-2-1.pdf

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Footnotes

1. The overall Product Profile score reflects: B1.1 the mean healthiness of a company's product portfolio; B1.2 the relative healthiness within product categories compared to peers, and; B1.3 changes in the nutritional quality of product portfolio s compared to the Global Index 2018 Product Profile.
2. In the Global Index 2018, the Product Profile Assessement was conducted as a separate assessment. The results were b ased on scores generated by applying the Health Star Rating (HSR) nutrient profiling system, which analyzes the level of several positive nutrients (e.g. fruits, vegetables and fibers) and several negative nutrients (e.g. salt, sugar and saturated f at) in products.
3. The overall Product Profile score reflects: B1.1 the mean healthiness of a company's product portfolio; B1.2 the relative healthiness within product categories compared to peers, and; B1.3 changes in the nutritional quality of product portfolio s compared to the Global Index 2018 Product Profile.
4. Retail sales data derived from Euromonitor International.
5. ATNI estimates this value by taking the proportion of healthy products within each category assessed and multiplying tha t figure by the global category retail sales. The values are then aggregated to generate an estimate of the overall global healthy sales (excluding baby foods, plain tea, and coffee, which are not included in the Product Profile).
6. Within-category ranks are calculated for all product categories in which two or more companies are active. Next, a perfor mance percentage is calculated from the inverted rank (e.g. first out of 10: inverted rank 10/10 = 100% performance sc ore; tenth out of 10: inverted rank 1/10 = 10% performance score). The 'Bottled Water- Pure' category receives a stand ard rating of five stars, according to the HSR algorithm for all companies.