

Category Report

Workforce Nutrition

This category holds 5% of the overall Index score.

This category assesses the extent to which companies support the nutritional wellbeing of their staff and supply chain workers by implementing workforce nutrition programs; and support parent-friendly working practices, including support for breastfeeding mothers at work and offering adequate parental leave.

To perform well in this category, companies should:

- Have programs in place with specific targets that support workforce nutrition for all employees (both office and production site) in India and includes: healthy food at work, nutrition education, nutrition-focused health checks, and breastfeeding support;
- These workforce nutrition programs are regularly evaluated on the health impact for the company's workforce, measured at outcome-level, and through a third-party assessment.
- Offer paid paternity leave for a minimum of 15 days or more;
- Offer arrangements to support breastfeeding mothers at work including providing private, hygienic, safe rooms to express breastmilk; refrigerators to store breastmilk; and other flexible working arrangements to support breastfeeding mothers (such as daycare arrangements or flexible working arrangements);
- Have workforce nutrition program(s) in place to improve the health and nutrition of workers at risk of experiencing malnutrition in their supply chains.





Workforce Nutrition

Category Context

Given that 58% of the global population spends at least one-third of their adult lives at work,⁹⁸ workforce nutrition programs have been identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a key means of addressing malnutrition at scale.⁹⁹ Studies have found returns on investment of 6:1 for workforce health programs that include nutrition – finding positive associations with productivity and cognitive ability, along with reduced absenteeism, medical costs, and rates of accidents/mistakes.¹⁰⁰ Workforce nutrition programs can also increase employee morale and motivation, improve employer/employee relations, and reduce staff turnover. In addition, such programs can help facilitate a company culture with a greater focus on nutrition in its business practices.

The Workforce Nutrition Alliance (WNA, see Box E1) has identified four main types of effective workforce nutrition interventions for companies' employees:¹⁰¹

- **Healthy food at work.** Programs that focus on increasing employees' access to healthy and safe foods at work – either through direct provision or subsidy, or by increasing the availability of healthy food options in the setting.
- **Nutrition education.** Programs aiming to change the nutrition and/or lifestyle behaviors of employees by increasing employees' knowledge of healthy nutrition.
- **Nutrition-focused health check-ups.** Periodic, one-to-one meetings with a health or nutrition professional to assess, and usually discuss, the employee's nutritional health.
- **Breastfeeding support.** Programs or company policies that enable working mothers to breastfeed exclusively for six months and continually for up to two years.

Box E1. The Workforce Nutrition Alliance

The WNA was launched by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) in 2019 to drive momentum on the topic of workforce nutrition and support organizations in assessing, enhancing, and implementing their workforce nutrition programs. It has developed a range of [guidebooks and technical support programs](#), covering various aspects of workforce nutrition and advising how to develop such programs. The WNA also helps to facilitate partnerships with nutritionists and other technical partners.

To help organizations monitor, evaluate, and report on the rollout of their workforce nutrition programs and commitments, the Alliance recently launched a self-assessment scorecard, [available free online](#).



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Workforce nutrition in India

In recent years, the Government of India has taken several critical steps to facilitate the responsibility of employers in enabling better nutrition for their workers.¹⁰² For example, through the Occupational Safety Health and Working Conditions Code (2020), business sites with more than 100 workers must provide one or more canteens on-site; although this currently does not require offering nutritious food.

Further, as part of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Eat Right India Initiative, a special Eat Right Campus¹⁰³ (voluntary) initiative has been launched, aiming to promote safe, healthy, and sustainable food in campuses such as in the workplaces. In order to receive the certification, four different parameters are tested including safe food, healthy food, sustainable food, and building awareness. If a campus scores three or more stars, it is certified as an 'Eat Right Campus'.

Further, the IMPAct4Nutrition (Initiative to Mobilize Private Action for Nutrition – I4N) platform was incubated by UNICEF India to encourage greater participation from businesses and other partners towards improved nutrition literacy and dietary habits in the work ecosystem.¹⁰⁴

Supporting breastfeeding mothers

Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants and one of the most effective ways to ensure child health and survival, while breastfeeding is also associated with health benefits for the mother.¹⁰⁵ WHO and UNICEF recommend that children be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life, after which children should receive complementary foods with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond.¹⁰⁶ Given that longer parental leave is associated with a longer duration of breastfeeding,¹⁰⁷ it is crucial employers play a supporting role. In India, employers are required by law to offer 26 weeks of maternity leave, which reduces to 12 weeks for adoption/surrogacy cases and for those with two or more children. Further, eligible male government employees are entitled to a leave of 15 days within six months of the birth or adoption of a child.¹⁰⁸ However, there is no formal paternity or second care giver policy in place for private sector employees.

Aside from parental leave, breastfeeding can be supported in the workplace through the facilitation of flexible working arrangements, as well as by providing appropriate workplace lactation facilities so mothers can continue breastfeeding upon returning to work. The Indian Social Security Code 2020 specifies that mothers are allowed two nursing breaks per day until a child reaches 15 months in age. Further, the Occupational Safety Health and Working Conditions Code (OSHW) 2020 specifies that an employer shall allow women with children under five years of age four visits a day to the creche/ childcare facility.

Supply chain workforce nutrition

Food and beverage companies have both the responsibility and opportunity to address malnutrition in their supply chains, which is often prevalent among producers of the commodities on which the company's products depend. In India, for example, 21% of agricultural workers are estimated to be underweight, which in turn costs the sector 2.2% of its Gross Value Added (GVA); one of the highest costs to a sector's production value caused by undernutrition in the world.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, there is also a clear business case for doing so, as shown in ATNI's [2021 Action Research on Workforce Nutrition in Supply Chains](#).



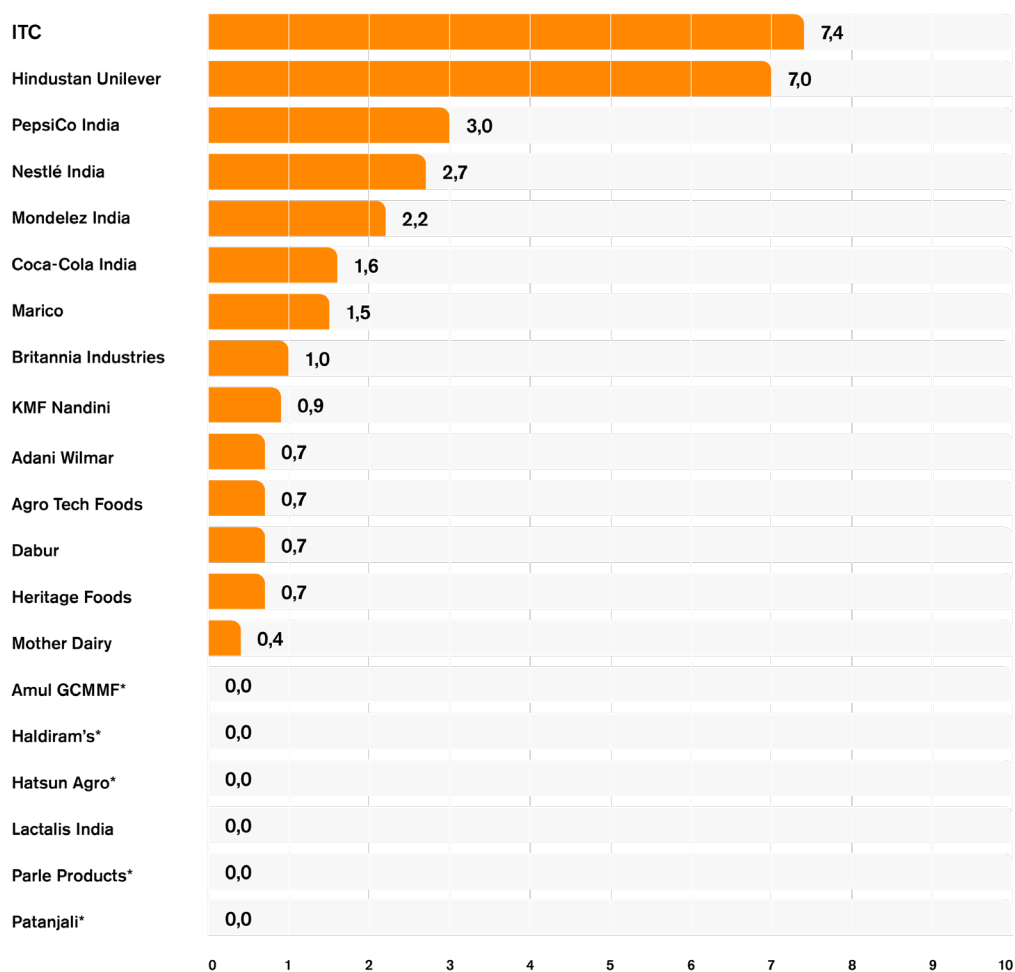
Box 3: Changes to methodology

Since the last India Index, changes have been made to the methodology to ensure greater alignment with the 'four pillars' of WNA: healthy food at work, nutrition education, nutrition-focused health checkups, and breastfeeding mothers at work. Further, since the last India Index, more regulation around workforce nutrition is in place, and since ATNI does not test a company's compliance with law, some indicators have been taken out, such as on asking on maternity leave (26 weeks required by law for first two children). Lastly, an indicator on the wider workforce nutrition has been added, following ATNI's work on workforce nutrition in supply chains.

Please find the full methodology [here](#).

Company ranking

Figure E1. Category ranking for Workforce Nutrition



* Did not provide information to ATNI. Assessment is based on publicly-available information only.

A company scores 0 when insufficient information or evidence is found on its policies and practices across the nutrition topics assessed in this Index.



Key Findings

- Half of 20 companies showed evidence of attention to workforce nutrition. Five of these showed evidence of having clearly defined workforce nutrition programs in place, of which Hindustan Unilever and ITC are the only two companies to include measurable targets. If all 20 companies in this Index started a workforce nutrition program, a total of 385,869 employees could be reached through access to and knowledge about healthy nutrition.
- In total, nine companies showed some evidence of making healthy food available at work, 10 companies showed evidence of offering nutrition education to their employees, and nine provide their employees with nutrition-focused health checks.
- In most cases, the scope of these interventions was not made clear, or appeared to be skewed towards office employees relative to those working at manufacturing sites.
- Only four companies demonstrated that they provide breastfeeding support at work through private hygiene rooms, refrigerators, and other flexible working arrangements (such as flexible working hours or creche facilities). Three additional companies only clearly offer flexible working arrangements.
- Eight companies offer 15 days or more of paternity or second caregiver leave, which is in line with (or more than) that offered to Indian government employees. Three of these companies provide at least double this amount.
- Only one company, Hindustan Unilever, was found to have a workforce nutrition program in place to improve the health and nutrition of some of its supply chain workers. ITC also showed some evidence of providing nutrition education for some of its value chain partners.

Detailed Findings

Do companies have a workforce nutrition program for employees in India that includes a focus on:

Healthy food at work

Nine out of 20 companies show some evidence of making healthy food available at work. Five companies (Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Marico, Nestlé India, and PepsiCo India) have a clearly defined program in place, of which Hindustan Unilever and ITC are the only two companies to include measurable targets. Four other companies (Britannia, Coca-Cola India, KMF Nandini and Mother Dairy) show some evidence of making healthy food available at work, but this is not part of a clear policy or program. There are differences in how companies ensure access to healthy food at work for their employees, such as some providing healthy and diverse meal options in the cafeteria, providing fresh fruit (like PepsiCo India), or providing a discount rate on nutritious food (such as on milk for KMF Nandini employees). Portion control and nutrition information were other approaches shared.

There are several companies that have shown evidence of all or most of their office and production sites having obtained the Eat Right Campus Certificate from FSSAI: Nestlé India, Marico, Mother Dairy and ITC.



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Interesting example: Hindustan Unilever provided evidence of using the Workforce Nutrition Alliance self-assessment scorecard to inform on their “Healthier U” program, applied at all 35 of their sites in India. The Healthier U program includes all 4 pillars: 1) Healthy food at work 2) Nutrition education 3) Nutrition-focused health checks 4) Breastfeeding support.

Companies were not transparent on how ‘healthy’ was defined for their canteen menu offerings or how affordable healthy options are compared to less healthy options – therefore companies in this Index have scope to improve by increasing employees’ access to nutritious meals at work.¹¹⁰ Ideally this would be combined with nutrition education campaigns, nudging workforces to healthier towards making choices.¹¹¹

Nutrition education

Half of the companies (10 out of 20) show evidence of offering nutrition education to their employees. Only Hindustan Unilever and ITC have clear targets in place for this activity.

Nutrition education can have many components, ranging from disseminating information on nutrition through materials such as posters or blogs, to full communication campaigns for behavior change, to individual nutrition counseling. Companies in the Index also take different approaches to informing their employees on nutrition. For example, most use their internal intranet to share information, offer courses on healthy diets, provide employees with a subscription to a third-party nutrition wellness app, or offer their employees access to consultations with a dietitian or nutritionist. Companies have also shared examples of hosting monthly webinars or training courses on nutrition-related topics. Often, nutrition education is offered through an online environment such as intranet or phone app, meaning that both office and production workers can access it – though the extent to which all employees are reached and use these services is often unclear.

Interesting example: The “Healthy Heritage League” (HHL) program by Heritage is a 100-day transformation program aimed at improving employee health and nutrition. It includes health check-ups, expert recommendations, one-on-one sessions with nutritionists, and access to a specific app to track fitness and daily nutrition intake.

From the examples shared by companies, it is unclear how their nutrition education materials are developed, nor the extent to which the interventions are strategically designed to achieve long-term behavioral change towards improved nutrition among their employees. The evidence brief from the WNA¹¹² clearly highlights that, even though nutrition education is a necessary part of programs aiming to support positive change, non-personalized and short-term educational campaigns may not translate into eating behavior improvements. Therefore, it is evident that companies in this Index can do more to ensure that employees’ nutrition attitudes, beliefs, and relational dynamics are understood, in order to promote lasting change. Ideally this should be linked to program elements that focus on access to healthy food at work.¹¹³

Nutrition-focused health checks

Nine companies were found to offer nutrition-focused health checks for their employees on a yearly, or bi-annual basis. These tended to be free-of-charge for their employees – and also sometimes for their spouses – and include a nutrition focus, such as measuring their Body Mass Index (BMI) or cholesterol levels.



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Interesting example: Only ITC shared a broad target in place: "100% workforce to be provided free health checks including (not limited to) nutrition focused indicators such as weight, BMI, BCA, Blood pressure etc." and "100% of workforce to have access to healthcare experts and nutritionist (24*7) via a dedicated and free app." It is not clear what the current participation levels are.

Interesting example: The Nestlé "Know your numbers" program includes a health check program focused on the assessing overall health profile of employees, combined with tailored advice on focus and attention for eating, nutrition and exercise.

Other companies showed evidence of health checks being in place for employees, but without specific attention to *nutrition*. As the health checks are already in place, companies can make the next step to ensure nutrition-focused checks are also included for employees. Studies show that when nutrition-focused health checks are coupled with individual and confidential counseling, this can further enhance positive nutrition-related outcomes.¹¹⁴ Further, aggregated data from nutrition-focused health checks can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of workforce nutrition programs in place.

Table E1. Workforce nutrition elements in place by company

Company	Workforce nutrition program for employees			Supply chain workforce nutrition program
	Healthy food	Nutrition education	Nutrition-focused health checks	
Britannia Industries	○	○	○	-
Coca-Cola India	○	◐	○	-
Heritage Foods	-	◐	◐	-
Hindustan Unilever	●	●	◐	◆
ITC	●	●	●	◇
KMF Nandini	○	-	-	-
Marico	◐	○	◐	-
Mondelēz India	-	◐	◐	-
Mother Dairy	○	◐	-	-
Nestlé India	◐	◐	◐	-
PepsiCo India	◐	◐	◐	-

- Yes, clearly defined program including measurable targets
- ◐ Yes, clearly defined program without measurable targets
- Yes, some evidence of making healthy food available at work, but not part of a clear policy/ program
- ◆ Yes, for more than three sites
- ◇ Yes, for one or two sites only
- No/no information

Note: ATNI's assessment of companies' workforce nutrition programs aligns with the four pillars defined by the WNA, including Healthy Food, Nutrition Education, Nutrition-focused Health Checks, and Breastfeeding Support. Information on Breastfeeding Support can be found in Table E2 below. Information on the company's workforce nutrition programs was not found for Adani Wilmar*, Agro Tech Foods, Amul*, Dabur, Haldiram's*, Hatsun Agro*, Lactalis India, Parle Products* and Patanjali*. *Company did not provide information to ATNI



Breastfeeding support

Four companies – Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Nestlé India, and PepsiCo India – showed evidence of offering breastfeeding support at work through the provision of private hygiene rooms, refrigerators, and other flexible working arrangements (such as flexible working hours or creche facilities). Three additional companies - Britannia, Marico, and Mondelēz India – only demonstrated offering flexible working arrangements or creche facilities.

Interesting examples: Hindustan Unilever has a “Maternity Transition Policy”, which ensures a transition to and from maternity, including attention to role and performance, flexible working options, offering on-site daycare facilities for children between six months and six years old (only in offices in Mumbai and Bangalore), and a travel policy for new parents. Nestlé India has something similar in place with “pre & post maternity benefits”.

The level of breastfeeding support offered to women working in the companies’ headquarters appears to be different to those in their production sites, as some companies indicated various facilities are only available in their headquarters or office spaces. Further, some companies indicated that they only offer breastfeeding facilities (private, hygienic room and refrigerators) in facilities with over 50 employees.

Some other companies indicated that breastfeeding space is available, but this was combined with creche facilities and therefore did not offer a private hygienic space. Evidence shows that having a dedicated breastfeeding space at work can significantly increase the period of exclusive breastfeeding and the period of breastfeeding with complementary feeding.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the return on investment can be high, with studies showing benefits beyond the nutritional advantages for the child - including improved productivity and reduced sick days in working mothers, and decreased healthcare costs.¹¹⁶ With 16 of the companies assessed providing less than comprehensive arrangements, food and beverage companies in India can do more to ensure breastfeeding support for their staff and disclose efforts publicly.

Do companies in India offer paid paternity leave?

Eight companies offer at least 15 days of paternity or second caregiver leave, in line with that offered to Indian government employees. Several companies offer arrangements that far exceed this, such as Hindustan Unilever (three weeks), Mondelēz (28 days), Coca-Cola (30 days), Nestlé (four weeks), and PepsiCo (12 weeks).

Interesting example: PepsiCo India has a gender agnostic leave policy. A distinction is made between primary caregiver and secondary caregiver leave, and for second caregivers a period of 12 weeks of fully paid leave is offered for up to two deliveries.



Table E2. Breastfeeding support elements in place by company

Company	Workforce nutrition program: breastfeeding support			Second caregiver leave
	Private, hygienic, safe rooms to express breastmilk	Refrigerators to store breastmilk	Other flexible working arrangements	
Adani Wilmar*	-	-	-	◇
Agro Tech Foods	-	-	-	◇
Britannia Industries	-	-	●	◇
Coca-Cola India	-	-	-	◇
Dabur India	-	-	-	◇
Heritage Foods	-	-	-	◇
Hindustan Unilever	●	●	●	◇
ITC	●	●	●	◇
KMF Nandini	-	-	-	◇
Marico	-	-	●	◇
Mondelēz India	-	-	●	◇
Nestlé India	●	●	●	◇
PepsiCo India	●	●	●	◇
● Yes				
◇ Yes, 15 days or more				
◇ Yes, less than 15 days/number of days is not disclosed				
- No/no information				

Information on the company's workforce nutrition programs was not found for Adani Wilmar*, Agro Tech Foods, Amul*, Dabur, Haldiram's*, Hatsun Agro*, Lactalis India, Parle Products* and Patanjali*.

* Did not provide information to ATNI

Has the company evaluated the health impact of the workforce nutrition program(s) in India in the last three years?

Three companies showed evidence of evaluating the health impacts of their workforce nutrition program(s) in India: Hindustan Unilever, ITC and PepsiCo India. Hindustan Unilever is the only company to show evidence of having measured impact at outcome-level. ITC shares in its Food Division Workforce Wellness Program document¹¹⁷ that employee feedback is sought through a biennial employee survey "iEngage", and refers to employee perception on for example how well wellness needs are addressed, number of employees using the "Doctor 24/7 application" and likelihood of recommending the "Body Composition Analysis camp" to family & friends. No evidence was found on workforce nutrition programs impact evaluations measured at outcome levels through third-party assessments.

How well do companies disclose information on their workforce nutrition programs?

For most of the companies assessed, disclosure on workforce nutrition programs in the public domain is very limited and it is often unclear if programs apply to all or some office and/or production site workers. Only some companies could show evidence of making programs available to their entire



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workforce, and it is not clear often how different workforces are reached. More than half of the companies did not show at all if or what measures are in place in terms of workforce nutrition support.

Do companies have a workforce nutrition program for supply chain workers in India?

Evidence of food and beverage manufacturers in India addressing malnutrition in their supply chains remains limited. Only two companies (Hindustan Unilever and ITC) showed some evidence of seeking to improve the health and nutrition of workers across the food value chains in which it is involved, but are not directly employed by the company.

Interesting example: “Healthy Diets for Tea Communities” is a coalition led by the GAIN and the Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP)¹¹⁸ - with funding from leading tea companies in India including Hindustan Unilever, as well as the Dutch government - to address malnutrition in tea supply chains, including Unilever’s sourcing estates in Assam. The program focuses on improving dietary diversification and improving nutrition through nutrition education, increasing access to nutritious food, and improving the enabling environment for healthy diets.¹¹⁹

ITC states on their website “*Workforce including direct employees and extended workforce (procurement, supply chain partners, vendors etc.,) are one of the most important assets of any organization and supporting them in leading a healthy balanced life is essential for sustainable growth of the organization*” – and showed evidence of organizing webinars and health checks for its value chain partners.¹²⁰

Other companies have programs in place seeking to address poverty and/or improve livelihoods for their supply chain workers, such as coconut farmers for Marico,¹²¹ or dairy farmers for Nestlé India.¹²² However, no clear nutrition component (such as access to healthy food, nutrition education, nutrition-related health checks, and/or breastfeeding support) could be identified. These existing programs could be leveraged to specifically improve nutrition pathways and outcomes for these workers, which can, in turn, further support farmer income generation and resilience.¹²³

Other companies showed evidence of their corporate social responsibility budgets being used to improve nutrition outcomes in communities surrounding their company-owned manufacturing sites. Such programs could be scaled up to also address malnutrition in communities that supply their raw materials, which in turn can increase supply chain resilience and deepen the relationships with their suppliers.

Recommendations for companies

In order to support the nutrition and health of its employees, thereby improving productivity and employee relations while fostering a culture of health consciousness within the company, companies are recommended to:

- Develop workforce nutrition programs that include providing access to healthy food at work, nutrition education, nutrition-related health checks, and breastfeeding support, being available to all employees, including those at manufacturing sites.
- Define quantifiable and meaningful expected outcomes for their workforce nutrition programs and evaluate accordingly - for example related to health-related behaviors, health-related outcomes, outcomes related to employee participation, or benefits to the company. Becoming a



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signatory of the Workforce Nutrition Alliance and utilizing its self-assessment scorecards is a good first step in this regard.

- Develop a clear policy on support extended to breastfeeding mothers at work in order to aid their maternal health; and this should apply equally to all office and production site employees. Support should, at a minimum, include i) Private, hygienic, safe rooms for expressing breastmilk; ii) Refrigerators in place to store milk; and iii) Other flexible working arrangements to support breastfeeding mothers, such as flexible working hours or on-site creche facilities. Furthermore, it is important to foster a workplace culture that is supportive of breastfeeding, for example through awareness campaigns.
- Offer maternity and paternity or second caregiver leave, extending parental leave policies to go beyond current national regulations, and remove limitations based on the number of children born.
- In addition, companies are encouraged to develop workforce nutrition programs for their supply chain workers in India, starting with a needs assessment to identify those groups at highest risk of experiencing malnutrition. They can then engage with their supply chain partners and relevant civil society organizations to help reach these groups, further study the underlying causes of malnutrition in that specific context, and develop a tailored program to address their nutritional needs in a targeted manner. For more guidance, see the [ATNI 2021 Action Research report](#) and/or engage with the WNA.

Recommendations for policymakers

- Policy makers are advised to apply minimal nutritional standards to food provisioning in canteens based on National Dietary Guidelines and incentivize employers to roll out EatRight campaigns through existing work structures.¹²⁴
- Further, policy makers could ensure inclusion of diet-related diseases in health checks within Occupational Safety Health (OSH) requirements at the state government level.¹²⁵
- Policy makers could consider regulating parental leave for supporting spouses, suggested to be for at least two weeks as per International Labour Organization (ILO) recommendations.
- Lastly, workforce nutrition efforts could be included as standard reporting on environmental, social and governance efforts by companies.



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