

METHODOLOGY

In this fifth iteration of the Global Index, ATNi assesses 30 of the world’s largest food and beverage manufacturers, seven of which for the first time, and measures the nutritional quality of their product portfolios in 25 global markets. In addition, the Global Index assesses companies’ policies, practices, and transparency on a range of key topics relating to nutrition and their impact on consumers’ diets, and the extent to which they align with the best internationally recognised guidance and standards currently available.

Only companies’ efforts relating to their commercial business (rather than philanthropy, etc.), that go beyond regulatory requirements, are taken into consideration.

Company selection:

The largest companies were selected based on their global retail sales of food and non-alcoholic beverages, using sales estimates from Euromonitor International Passport data for the financial year (FY) 2022. Priority was further given to those with wider geographic coverage, including low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) presence, and portfolio relevance.

Methodology revision: The methodology has been revised significantly since the Global Index 2021, with a substantially reduced set of indicators focused on priority topics that are considered key for industry transformation.

This process was informed by the following:

- Analysis of and lessons learned from previous ATNi Indexes;
- One-on-one consultations with relevant stakeholders and experts (including the ATNi Expert Group);
- Latest reports, studies, and insights on both the global nutrition and food industry context
- Latest national and international (voluntary) guidance from authoritative public health bodies, such as governments and the World Health Organization (WHO);
- Exit survey and cognitive interviews with company representatives following the Global Index 2021;
- ATNi’s 2023-2027 strategy.

Following this process, the number of indicators was reduced from a total of 156 to 51, the structure simplified, and category weightings adjusted. The scope of topics assessed has been narrowed slightly to focus on those which have the highest priority for stakeholders, research validity, and opportunity for impact.

TABLE 1
OVERVIEW OF INDICATOR CATEGORIES AND THEIR RELATIVE WEIGHTINGS

Category weighting	2021 weighting	2024	No. of indicators
A. Nutrition Governance	12.5%	15%	7
B1. Product Profile	20%	30%	2
B2. Portfolio Improvement	7,5%	10%	12 +4 unscored
B3. NPMs for Reporting	7,5%	5%	4
C. Affordable Nutrition	15%	15%	6
D. Responsible Marketing	20%	15%	7
E. Workforce Nutrition	2.5%	5%	6
F. Responsible Labelling	10%	5%	3

A full list of indicators used for the Global Index 2024 can be found in Appendix II of the full 2024 Global Index Methodology.

PROFILE PROFILE

Category B1 (Product Profile), ATNi uses the Health Star Rating (HSR) nutrient profile model (NPM) to assess the healthiness of food and beverage manufacturers’ product portfolios with direct relevance for people’s diets. The independent performance measurement of the sales from healthier products and mean HSR constitutes 30% of the overall Index Score weight. Other NPMs are also applied to obtain information, but not used for the overall Global Index scoring and ranking: the WHO European NPM, to assess whether products are eligible to be marketed to children; Nutri-Score; and the UK NPM.

SCORING APPROACH

1 Indicator Level

- Individual indicators: close-ended answer options selected.
- For certain indicators, multipliers are applied
- Indicator score: out of 10 points.
- For B1 (Product Profile), the two indicators are scored based on the Product Profile results. See the Product Profile section for further details.

2 Category Level

- Sum of indicator scores (including multipliers).
- Divided by total score available per category (adjusted if any indicators are considered 'not applicable'), which provides the category score (out of 10).

3 Overall Score

- Sum of category scores with category weightings applied provides the overall score (out of 10).
- For breast-milk substitutes (BMS)/commercial complementary food (CF) companies, adjustment (up to 1.5 points) based on the results of the 2024 BMS/CF Indexes.

RESEARCH PROCESS

Companies are first provided access to the full survey invited to submit evidence - which is both publicly available and that which is not in the public domain, sometimes under a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) with ATNi - relating to each indicator. This is reviewed by ATNi researchers, with one researcher assigned per category, to make a preliminary assessment. For non-engaging companies, the researchers check for information available on the companies' public domains.

Companies review the preliminary assessments and are given a second opportunity to submit evidence and provide further explanation. ATNi researchers then assess whether this is sufficient to change the score.

For quality assurance and to check consistency, all assessments are reviewed by another researcher, and further checks are carried out by the research lead and senior research team.

Limitations

The trade-off between aligning with new developments and providing comparability over time. Given the extent of the methodology revision for this Index, comparability with the previous Index in terms of scoring is limited, and direct comparisons in scores are not encouraged.

Where possible, ATNi has sought to highlight companies' developments since the 2021 index on an indicator-by-indicator basis through qualitative analysis.

The index uses the same framework to assess a range of companies with very different features. The companies assessed in this index vary considerably in terms of portfolio types, size, market presence, ownership structure, regulatory contexts, and cultural context. Some indicators will naturally have greater or lesser applicability to certain companies than others.

ATNi has sought to manage this by including the option to make certain indicators 'Not applicable' for certain companies, although it is not always black-and-white, and doing so can give that company a slight scoring advantage.

A substantial part of the index assesses companies' commitments and self-reported performance, without independent verification, since it is not feasible to perform independent, on-the-ground assessments of companies' practices across all topics. It also is assumed that all publicly reported and privately disclosed data is accurate, although for many indicators ATNi requires companies to provide evidence of performance.

The true performance of non-engaging companies, or companies with limited engagement, may not be fully captured. The results of the Index therefore may not provide a full representation of the companies' nutrition-related activities. However, it is worth noting that 25 of the 30 companies engaged during this iteration. Time constraints may also limit the amount of evidence that companies can share.

The research does not capture all corporate activities that may also have an indirect but significant impact on public health, including: 1) environmental sustainability; 2) corporate tax avoidance practices; 3) corporate wealth and income distribution; and 4) country-specific food lobbying practices.