

CATEGORY PORTFOLIO IMPROVEMENT:

MACRONUTRIENTS AND FOOD COMPONENTS

CATEGORY CONTEXT

Improving the healthiness of food and beverage (F&B) companies' product portfolios and limiting the negative impact of increased consumption of 'less healthy' foods and diets is crucial to addressing public health challenges in Tanzania. Rising rates of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)—such as hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases—are increasingly linked to dietary factors, particularly the increasing consumption of packaged processed foods that are high in fats, sugar and salt.¹

FINDINGS

Of the 10 companies assessed in the Corporate Profile, only one company—PepsiCo—has established global targets to address key nutrients of concern, including saturated fat, industrially produced trans fats (iTFA), sodium, and added sugars, across some but not all product categories. The company has set clear targets for these nutrients and publicly reports on its global progress toward meeting them. It is also the only company in this assessment to have set targets to increase levels of minimally processed fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and wholegrains in its global portfolio. However, PepsiCo does not report on progress against these targets in the Tanzanian market.

While Coca-Cola reports on efforts to reduce sugar across its global product range, it has not defined targets or reported progress specific to the Tanzanian market.

TABLE 1
POLICY LANDSCAPE

National Policy or Regulation	Summary
National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan 2021/22 - 2025/26	Focuses on creating healthier food environments and reducing both overnutrition and undernutrition by limiting the consumption of 'less healthy' foods and ensuring equitable access to healthy food choices through coordinated, evidence-based, multisectoral action. ²
National Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2021-2026	Recognizes the role of excessive intake of foods high in saturated fats, sugars, and salt in increasing NCD prevalence in Tanzania, and emphasizes healthy diets as essential for maintaining good health. ¹
Tanzania Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for a Healthy Population: Technical Recommendations, 2023	Provides recommendations aligned with World Health Organization (WHO) guidance on nutrient intake, such as promoting dietary diversity by encouraging the daily consumption of six food groups and increasing intake of vegetables and fruits, and limiting saturated and trans fats and reducing the intake of free sugars, salt, and ultra-processed foods. ³
Tanzania Food, Drugs and Cosmetics (Food Labelling) Regulations, 2006 and Nutrition Labelling – Requirements 2015	Mandates that all food products sold in Tanzania must have clear, accurate, and non-misleading labels, including the product name, net contents, list of ingredients and additives, manufacturing and expiry dates, and manufacturer's details. ^{4,5}

One Tanzania-headquartered company—Tanga—informed ATNi that it has a product reformulation strategy in place to reduce sodium content by using sodium substitutes and potassium-based salts in its cheese production. The company also expressed its

intention to reduce fat and sugar levels in its milk and yoghurt products. However, the company has not published information on these efforts in the public domain.

BOX 1

POLICY COHERENCE CHALLENGES FOR REDUCING SUGAR INTAKE IN TANZANIA

Sugar is one of the key commodities underpinning Tanzania's economic growth, agricultural industry and trade. In 2023, the country produced 342,000 tonnes of sugar;⁶ however, as demand outstripped local supply, Tanzania also imported up to USD 204 million in sugar primarily from Brazil, India, Thailand and United Arab Emirates in the same year.⁷ Tanzania also exports smaller quantities of sugar to countries such as Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, Italy, and India.⁷ The government has committed to achieve sugar self-sufficiency by 2025 through investments in boosting local sugar production and processing factories.⁸

The economic significance of sugar is at odds with growing public health priorities in the country, which flag sugar as a key nutrient of concern. Sugar has been identified as one of the most consumed commodities in Tanzania, as per capita consumption of sugar reached 10.3kg in 2021.⁹ This is likely attributed to high rates of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption. In addition to suggested measures to reduce sugar intake outlined in Tanzania's Food-based Dietary Guidelines, the government has committed to introduce a Nutrition Promotion Levy on SSBs.¹⁰ Research suggests that a tax of 20% on sugar-sweetened beverages could lead to a 6.6% reduction in obesity rates in the country.¹¹ Such taxes have stimulated effective industry reformulation efforts in other markets. However, in Tanzania, regulatory hurdles may exist: current regulation specifies that beverages containing non-nutritive sweeteners cannot also contain sugar, meaning that companies can either sell full-sugar products or sugar-free products, rather than reduced sugar varieties.

In summary, policy coherence challenges exist between Tanzania's ambition to grow its sugar sector and to reduce sugar intake to meet public health goals. There is a strong case for the industry and government to address these hurdles for sugar reduction in products.

INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure their products contribute to healthy diets in Tanzania, F&B companies are recommended to:

- Identify products or categories that are high in applicable nutrients of concern (sodium, sugar, saturated fats and iTFAs) and publish specific, measurable, and time-bound targets for reducing levels of these nutrients across all relevant product categories sold in Tanzania.
- Publicly report on annual progress against reformulation targets in the Tanzania market using quantitative metrics.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

F&B companies in Tanzania are encouraged to integrate reformulation strategies into their company policies, aligning with international guidelines such as those from the WHO and regional policies. These strategies should aim to reduce levels of salt, sugars, and fats, while enhancing the overall nutritional profile of products to support national efforts to improve dietary health. Policymakers are encouraged to use the findings from this research to develop a roadmap outlining measures to drive and align industry reformulation efforts to increase the healthiness of F&B products across the market.

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