

CATEGORY NUTRITION GOVERNANCE



CATEGORY CONTEXT

There is increasing global awareness among policymakers, investors, and civil society about the influence of food and beverage (F&B) manufacturers in shaping consumers' diets, and the impact that this has on public health. This is also the case in Kenya, where diets are shifting from fresh and minimally processed foods to include more packaged processed foods, as well as foods high in fat, salt, and sugar.

F&B manufacturers influence consumers' diets not only through the healthiness of the products they sell, but also through how these are marketed, priced, distributed, and labelled. It is therefore important that companies develop clear strategies to ensure their actions across these various aspects are aligned with public health goal, as defined by public health and food authorities in Kenya.

FINDINGS

Reporting on F&B companies' nutrition-related policies and practices in Kenya was found to be very limited among the 12 companies assessed. While Kenya-headquartered companies have not yet published information on strategic approaches to improving diets, shaping healthy diets does appear to be on their agendas.

Three companies—Brookside, Capwell and Kevian—refer to their role in providing access to nutritious or healthy foods on their websites, and others—such as Bidco—market some their products as healthy (see Table 2). These companies have the opportunity to formalize and elaborate on this role by developing a comprehensive nutrition strategy.

TABLE 1
POLICY LANDSCAPE

National Policy or Regulation	Summary
Kenya Nutrition Action Plan (KNAP) 2023-2027	The KNAP currently under development will outline an five-year multisectoral approach to combat malnutrition in all its forms in Kenya. ¹
National Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases 2021/22 - 2025/26	Outlines a framework for engaging the private sector to reduce non-communicable disease, including through shaping healthy environments and responsible marketing. ²
Kenya Nutrient Profiling Model (KNPM)	Aims to set clear criteria for defining 'healthy'. The government plans to use it as the basis for interpretative front-of-pack labelling (FOPL). The model could also inform other policies to (re-)shape the food environment—including fiscal measures, public procurement, and marketing restrictions. ³

TABLE 2
KENYAN COMPANIES REFERENCING NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Company	Statement on company website
Bidco	The company historically positioned some of its products as contributing to healthier lifestyles, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Launch of SunGold Lite to boost healthier lifestyle among Kenyans.”⁴ “Fortified with vitamins A, D, and E, [Kimbo] has made more Kenyans healthy and live longer.”⁵
Brookside	The company's home page states “We bring wholesome nutrition to you and your family” ⁶
Capwell	Capwell's purpose statement is “enriching lives through nutrition,” and its vision is to “bring fulfilment to our consumers by providing nutritious, safe and convenient foods.” ⁷
New KCC	The company's mission statement is “To nourish and refresh consumers with innovative, quality and affordable dairy products.” ⁸

Additionally, while the three global-headquartered companies included in the assessment—Coca-Cola, Flora FG and Nestlé—have global nutrition strategies in place, none publicly report on how these are implemented in Kenya. Common features of their global nutrition strategies, include:

- Ensuring affordability, particularly through selling in small pack sizes
- Reformulating or adding new 'healthier' products to their portfolio
- Fortifying with micronutrients
- Implementing responsible marketing and labelling policies

All three companies did share evidence with ATNi of implementing specific elements of their global strategies in Kenya. Flora FG provided quantitative evidence of making progress toward its saturated fat target through its global 'Nutritional Benchmarking Programme' in Kenya. Coca-Cola shared qualitative examples offering reduced- and zero-sugar options¹ in the market; products in various pack sizes; and nutritional information on packaging across multiple product types. Some online evidence was found of Nestlé providing an affordable fortified dairy drink in Kenya in small pack sizes. However, comprehensive, quantitative reporting on the implementation of each aspect of their strategies in Kenya was not found.

While these global-headquartered companies also have accountability assigned at the senior management level for their global strategies, it is unclear whether those accountable also review or are responsible for ensuring progress on implementation specifically in Kenya. No information on such nutrition governance and accountability frameworks was found in the public domain for the Kenya-headquartered companies.

KEY INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that companies' commercial operations contribute to public health goals in Kenya, F&B companies are encouraged to:

- Develop and publish a clear commercial strategy to contribute to healthier and more nutritious diets and publicly report on its implementation in Kenya.
- Set a specific, measurable, and timebound target to increase sales of products that meet a government-endorsed NPM such as the KNPM, showing annual progress on meeting set targets.
- Have the Board of Directors (or regional equivalent) review progress against the nutrition strategy on at least an annual basis.
- Assign formal accountability for the implementation and success of the nutrition strategy ideally to the CEO, or another senior-level executive in Kenya. Link executive (or regional equivalent) remuneration to at least one of the nutrition strategy's targets or metrics.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Kenyan government has committed to advancing policies that support healthy diets, including FOP nutrition labelling and marketing to children.⁹ The government is encouraged to use the outcomes of this research to help build a roadmap for industry and policymakers outlining measures to mitigate the potential negative impact of packaged processed foods and beverages on healthy diets.



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