

# Unilever

## Product categories assessed

Processed Meat and  
Seafood|Concentrates|Dairy|Edible  
Oils|Ice Cream and Frozen  
Desserts|Other Hot Drinks|Ready  
Meals|Rice, Pasta and Noodles|RTD  
Tea|Sauces, Dressings,  
Condiments|Soup|Sweet Spreads

Percentage of company global sales  
covered by Product Profile assessment  
50-55%

Headquarters  
U.K.

Number of employees  
150000

Type of ownership  
Public



## Product Profile ⓘ

Rank 2 / Score 6.3

Rank 17 / Score 4.2

Rank 2 (2018)

Rank 12 (2018) ⓘ

### 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 2

Score 6.3

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:** Unilever ranks second maintaining its position compared with the Global Index 2018. The company's overall score decreases from 6.7 to 6.3 in 2021. The company ranks first in Lifestyles (Category E) and Labeling (Category F), and performs above average in all Index categories.
- **GOVERNANCE:** The company has a comprehensive approach to tackling all forms of malnutrition and takes the next step by disclosing in its 'Future Foods' strategy how it aims to support a global "food systems transformation". This strategy was released at the end of 2020 following the completion of its Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP), which guided the company and many others in the industry for 10 years. The new strategy contains six time-bounded (by 2022 or 2025) nutrition-related goals. Apart from this, the company's largest food brand, Knorr, has defined the purpose to 'Reinvent Food for Humanity' and has committed to fortification of essential micronutrients and lowering amounts of salt, saturated fat and sugar across the product portfolio.
- **GOVERNANCE:** As in 2018, Unilever is commended for having its nutrition reporting independently verified at regular intervals. Plus, the company achieved its 2020 goal to double the proportion of products meeting its Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) criteria, the 'Highest Nutritional Standards' (HNS). By 2020, 61 percent of food in its portfolio met the HNS standards, a figure which is externally verified, and the company has defined a new commitment to achieve 70 percent HNS compliance by 2022.
- **PRODUCTS:** The company shared with ATNI its new Fortification guidelines, which include its existing commitment to provide more than 200 billion servings with at least one of the five key micronutrients – vitamin A, vitamin D, iodine, iron, and zinc – by 2022. Compared to 2018, Unilever has enhanced its approach by seeking ingredients with high inherent levels of micronutrients. The company's fortification strategy is built on the use of iodized salt, improved use of nutrient-rich ingredients, and adding essential nutrients to affordable, regularly consumed products.
- **PRODUCTS:** Unilever has a full fledged nutrient profiling model, which contributes to the company obtaining the highest 'healthy multiplier' possible in ATNI's methodology (used for all indicators asking about policies and practices related to healthy products). As part of its Future Foods strategy, Unilever has committed to doubling the number of products with positive nutrients (vegetables, fruits, proteins, or micronutrients like vitamins, zinc, iron, and iodine) globally by 2025. The company informed ATNI it is in the process of updating its HNS to include positive nutrients, as well as sugar, benchmarks for all product groups. In addition, the company shared with ATNI its Guidance document for the use of the HNS in product development, which requires every new food retail product launched to meet the HNS, or otherwise requires a separate internal approval process.
- **ACCESSIBILITY:** Since 2018, Unilever has made stronger commitments to reach low-income consumers and those in low- and middle-income countries that lack access to

## Priority areas for improvement

- **GOVERNANCE:** Through its Annual Reports and Accounts 2019, the company discloses results of its overall management review; although specific results for the Foods & Refreshment brands and division are less clear. Unilever confirmed to ATNI that it conducts formal reviews each year for the Foods & Refreshment divisional strategy, as well as for individual categories with the Unilever Leadership Executive (ULE) team. The company is encouraged to disclose accountability arrangements (day-to-day responsibility for its new nutrition strategy), and could consider explicitly linking and disclosing nutrition-related targets with CEO and other senior executives' remunerations to further improve its performance.
- **PRODUCTS:** The company does not make a clear commitment to only fortify products of high underlying quality, although in its fortification guidelines (which the company shared with ATNI), it states that the ideal fortification carrier is HNS compliant. When not compliant, products require a risk-benefit assessment. ATNI recommends that Unilever increases its transparency by publishing its fortification guidelines.
- **ACCESSIBILITY:** It is recommended that Unilever strengthens its accessibility strategy by adopting and publicly disclosing a formal policy with concrete, measurable targets that specifically address the affordability of healthy products (meeting the company's nutrition criteria or external standards).
- **MARKETING:** The company commits to all responsible marketing techniques laid out by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Advertising and Marketing Communications code. However, it does not provide evidence of a formal, independent, third-party auditing process related to these commitments. Regarding responsible marketing to children, the company commits to not promote its brands or products in primary or secondary schools (except for educational purposes and in agreement with school administrators, and only in relation to products 'responsibly made for kids'), and to not undertake any Marketing or Point of Sale Communications to children under six years of age. However, Unilever is strongly encouraged to expand this commitment to children under the age of 18, covering locations near schools and other places common for children, such as sports facilities, as recommended by WHO/UNICEF.
- **LIFESTYLES:** Unilever provides evidence that, in some of its consumer education programs, it excludes product or brand-level branding. The company is encouraged to exclude brand-level from community educational programs to ensure that educational programs are not used for marketing activities.
- **LABELING:** The company published its 'Position on Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling' (no date) online, which states its preference for the guideline daily amount (GDA) system and a determination to work towards the WHO ambition of one, simple, consistent global standard. As a good practice, the company states online that, when mandatory labelling schemes are in place, it will "not provide any additional nutrition labelling or nutrition information front-of-pack which could confuse consumers or dilute the impact or

affordably priced, healthy products. To reach priority populations with specially designed healthy products in more markets, Unilever has expanded its door-to-door 'Shakti distribution' model, highlighted in the India Spotlight Index 2020, and launched related programmes in 10 more countries, including Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Colombia, and Egypt.

- **MARKETING:** With the new 'Principles on Responsible Food & Beverage Marketing to Children' policy released in 2020, the company has committed not to direct any marketing to children under 12. For digital platforms, Unilever expands its commitment to children under 13. For television and other media, the company has lowered its audience thresholds to not market in media where children under 12 represent more than 25 percent of the audience, compared to 35 percent in 2018. In addition, the company has committed not to use influencers under 12 and those who primarily appeal to children aged under 12.

- **LIFESTYLES:** To support workforce health and nutrition, Unilever developed its 'Lamplighter' employee programme in 2001, which aims to improve the physical health, exercise, nutrition, and mental resilience of its workforce in all countries with 100 or more employees, and includes independent impact evaluations – which is an industry best practice. The company has established a 'Wellbeing Framework', which addresses physical, mental, emotional, and purposeful wellbeing. Unilever is one of the few companies to make a commitment to improving the health and wellness of groups across the wider food supply chain that are not direct employees (such as smallholder farmers, factory workers, and small scale vendors). To support breastfeeding, Unilever has been enabling sites with over 50 female employees to provide breastfeeding facilities and access to crèche services. In addition, the company has launched a Global Paternity Leave Standard for Unilever employees which, by the end of 2019, saw all fathers entitled to a minimum of three weeks' paid leave.

- **LIFESTYLES:** Unilever has a variety of consumer-oriented health and/or nutrition education programs in both low-income and low- and middle-income settings. The company is one of four in this Index that only funds programs which are designed by and/or (co)implemented with diverse stakeholder groups with relevant expertise. For example, the 'Seeds of Prosperity' program, in partnership with GAIN and the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), which supports nutrition literacy in tea farming regions. The company shared results with ATNI, showing in Assam and Tamil Nadu in India, dietary diversity scores increased significantly in all groups after six months.

- **LABELING:** Compared to 2018, the company has expanded its commitment to using nutrition or health claims on products that have been fortified only when they meet relevant Codex standards and the World Health Organization (WHO)/Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Guidelines on Food Fortification with Micronutrients. Apart from having both front-of-pack (FOP) and back-of-pack (BOP) labeling commitments, the company's relatively strong performance in Labeling (category F) can also be attributed to its disclosure performance. Unilever discloses a commitment to implement an interpretive FOP system on some relevant products, rather than only a numeric format (as in 2018). Interpretative labels provide information in a clear, easy to understand format and can help consumers to make more informed choices regarding their health, and this is industry best practice.

effectiveness of the mandatory scheme.". Unilever has committed to use interpretative labelling on some of its relevant products globally, and it is recommended that the company expands this to all products.

- **ENGAGEMENT:** Unilever is encouraged to improve its lobbying disclosure on its website by publishing a more comprehensive list of trade associations in which it participates, as well as any potential governance conflicts of interest and seats of company Board members at these organizations. ATNI advises that the company adopts industry best practice by publicly expressing a commitment to only engage with governments and policymakers with the intention of supporting measures to prevent and address malnutrition, and only with an emphasis on independent, peer-reviewed science. The company could consider establishing a mechanism for corrective action regarding its engagement/lobbying practices by conducting regular internal/independent audits on lobbying practices, and publicly disclosing expenditure and memberships in trade associations. There is also significant scope for the company to: 1) improve its engagement with stakeholders in developing its nutrition strategy, policies, and/or programs; 2) seek specialist external experts' advice on how to prevent and address various forms of malnutrition; and, 3) form partnerships with, or formally support, international initiatives/organizations to address malnutrition in priority populations. The company is therefore encouraged to conduct well-structured and focused engagement with stakeholders who have expertise in nutrition and addressing malnutrition, to strengthen their strategies and policies and obtain valuable feedback on their relevance and effectiveness.

- **ENGAGEMENT:** The company commits to playing an active and constructive part in supporting governments' efforts to combat all forms of malnutrition globally, and provides more examples doing so than in 2018. For example, in Vietnam, it has been working with the National Institute of Nutrition under the Ministry of Health on national strategies for food fortification, while for South Africa, the company shared evidence with ATNI of efforts to support Government strategies to reduce sodium by focusing on stock cubes. The company published a detailed narrative about their engagement with different stakeholders to inform their nutrition activities, including international organizations, national bodies, and CSOs.

# CATEGORY ANALYSIS

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

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.

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

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.

- C1 Product pricing
- C2 Product distribution



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



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

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

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.

-  Influencing policymakers
-  Stakeholder engagement

# DETAILED PRODUCT PROFILE RESULTS<sup>1</sup>

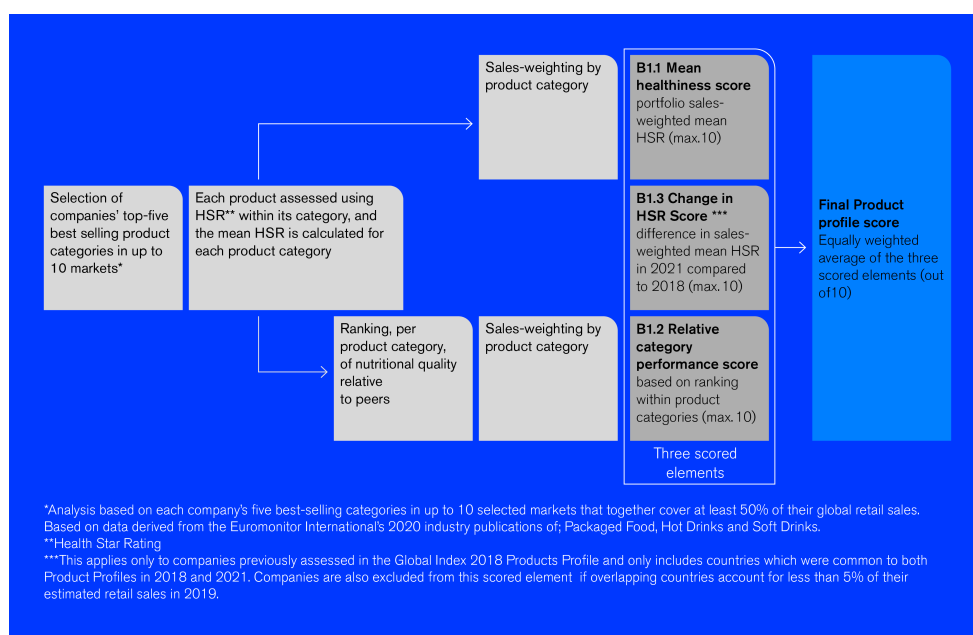


17

Rank 17 / Score 4.2

The Product Profile is an independent assessment of the nutritional quality of companies' product portfolios. For this purpose, ATNI uses the Health Star Rating (HSR) model, which rates foods from 0.5 to 5.0 based on their nutritional quality. ATNI uses the threshold of 3.5 stars or more to classify products as generally healthy. This assessment is undertaken in partnership with The George Institute for Global Health (TGI), with additional data input from Innova Market Insights.

The methodology for the Global Index 2021 Product Profile has been revised and now includes three scored elements. 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 portfolios compared to the Global Index 2018 Product Profile. The steps taken to calculate the final Product Profile scores are visualized in Box 1. The next section further explains each of these three elements.



Unilever 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 1,653 products analyzed – accounting for approximately 35-40% of global retail sales in 2017, excluding plain tea, and coffee. In this Index, a total of 3,616 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 50-55% of the company's global retail sales, excluding plain tea, and coffee.



Brazil, France and Germany are new countries included in this iteration. New Zealand and Hong Kong were included in the 2018 but have been omitted this time. In 2018, a total of 10 product categories were covered by the assessment, compared to 11 categories in 2021. Products from the 'Baked Goods,' 'Breakfast cereals,' and 'Other hot drinks,' categories are assessed in 2021 but were not in 2018. 'Concentrates' and 'Dairy' were assessed in 2018 but are not in 2021. The 'Spreads' category has been replaced with 'Sweet Spreads'.

In this Product Profile assessment, Unilever's scores 4.3 out of 10 (B1.1) in the mean healthiness element, 6.3 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 Unilever obtaining an overall score of 4.2 out of 10, ranking 17 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 ①	Healthy products (HSR)				Products suitable to market to children (WHO regional models) - UNSCORED		
			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) ①	No. products assessed	% products suitable	% sales from suitable
2.2	Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Mexico, South Africa, UK and USA	50-55%	3616	18%	17%	15%	3625	13%	6%

- A total of 3,616 products manufactured by Unilever, sold in 10 countries, covering 11 product categories, were included in this Product Profile (plain tea and coffee, which account for a significant part of the company's revenues, were not assessed on the basis that these make an inherently low nutritional contribution and are thereby not required to display a nutrient declaration). The company's sales-weighted mean HSR is 2.2 out of 5. ATNI turns this value into a score between 0 and 10, resulting in a mean healthiness score of 4.3 out of 10 for Unilever. The company ranks 18 out of 25 companies in this first scored element (B1.1).

- Overall, 18% of distinct products assessed were found to meet the HSR healthy threshold (HSR ≥3.5). Together, these products accounted for an estimated 17% of Unilever's retail sales of packaged food and beverages 2019 in the selected markets (excluding 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 15% of its global retail sales from healthy products in 2019.

WHO nutrient profiling models (unscored): Only 13% 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 6% 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) 
Baked Goods	69	13%	1.8	2	5th out of 9
Ice cream and frozen desserts	1749	5%	2.1	2	3rd out of 7
Other Hot Drinks	13	0%	1.6	1.4	2nd out of 5
RTD Tea	18	0%	1.8	1.7	2nd out of 7
Sauces, Dressings and Condiments	1,025	15%	1.9	2.5	9th out of 11
Breakfast Cereals	22	100%	3.8	3.5	2nd out of 6
Processed Meat and Seafood	8	100%	4.1	3.1	1st out of 8
Ready Meals	184	61%	3.2	3	3rd out of 9
Rice, Pasta and Noodles	36	31%	3.2	2.4	3rd out of 6
Soup	480	52%	2.7	2.5	5th out of 8
Sweet Spreads	12	8%	2.5	2.2	2nd out of 5

- For Unilever, 'Processed Meat and Seafood,' was the best performing category, where a total of 8 products analyzed obtained mean HSR of 4.1 out of 5. 'Breakfast Cereals' was the next best performing category (mean HSR of 3.8).

Unilever scores 6.3 out of 10 in this second scored element (B1.2) and ranks 13 out of 25 companies. This is based on its ranking compared to peers within the 11 categories, using the scoring system set out in ATNI's methodology.

- For nine out of the 11 categories assessed, Unilever's 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 'Processed Meat and Seafood' category.

## 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	204	264	2.3	2.2
China	99	209	1.8	2
India	107	190	2.4	2.1
Mexico	56	202	2.5	2.3
South Africa	199	242	2.7	2.5
UK	272	409	2.2	2.3
USA	479	553	1.9	2.1
TOTAL	1416	2069	2.1	2.2

- Among the 18 companies for which this third scored element was applicable, Unilever was one of nine companies which showed an increase in mean HSR between the 2018 and 2021 Product Profiles (mean HSR=2.1 to 2.2). In 2018 assessment, 'RTD Tea' represented a much larger proportion of sales in the assessment, versus 2021. In contrast the 'Sauces, Dressings and Condiments' represented a much smaller proportion of sales in the 2018 assessment compared to 2021. These category differences have impacted the company's overall results.

- For all countries combined, Unilever achieves an increase of 0.1 (mean HSR=2.1 to 2.2) in mean HSR between 2018 and 2021 resulting in a score of 2 out of 10 (B1.3) on this element using the scoring system set out in ATNI's methodology.

Full Product Profile report: [https://new-l40rlzsq.accessstonutrition.org/app/uploads/2021/06/GI\\_Global-Index\\_TGI-product-profile\\_2021-2-1.pdf](https://new-l40rlzsq.accessstonutrition.org/app/uploads/2021/06/GI_Global-Index_TGI-product-profile_2021-2-1.pdf)

There has been a critical error on this website.

[Learn more about troubleshooting WordPress.](#)

