

CFS 50 Side Event 20: Launch of G7 Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative Private Sector Report and Open Call for businesses outside of G7 to join the initiative

The side event marked the launch of the World Benchmarking Alliance's [assessment](#) of food and agriculture companies as part of the G7 Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (G7 SSCI). The G7 SSCI is led by the German Government, which holds the G7 Presidency for 2022, with support from the OECD Secretariat and World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA). It was launched in 2021, whereby 22 food and agriculture companies pledged to improve the environmental, social, and nutritional impact of their operations and supply chains. These companies are influential players, collectively earning over 550 billion USD in annual global revenue, directly employing over 2 million people and millions more throughout their supply chains and representing both upstream and downstream segments of the value chain. The objective is to accelerate global progress towards the SDGs and, more specifically, propel an agricultural transformation that will lead to a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient sector.

A year on, the WBA assessed the progress companies made to deliver on their pledge. At this side event companies' performance was published in comparison to their performance to the results of the 2021 Food and Agriculture Benchmark. The results were presented: Over three-quarters of companies assessed through the G7 SSCI made progress on at least one topic deemed crucial for food system transformation, and all companies improved their public disclosure by publishing new reports. This is reason for optimism as companies are on their journey and shows that accountability is a driver for change.

During this session we heard from companies, governments, investors and civil society to hear their reflections on the initiative and new report, and how we can continue to collectively drive accountability of the private sector through reporting progress and performance.

- Yasuo Takeuchi, Manager, Meiji

This initiative is important as it gives us a tool to see our progress against societal expectations measurable, and on the other side is the political support of the G7.

- Matthias Pohl, Societal Outreach Lead, BASF

Reporting means you look at your own business and puts pressure on us to formulate a better problem formulation. So what are the targets? What is our sustainability commitment moving forward? Transparency, measuring and reporting is a cornerstone to engaging stakeholders and getting to a common goal and understand the societal value business can bring.

- Charlotte Von Essen, Advisor, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

We are all key stakeholders and it is of utmost importance that we enhance compliance with international standards. Governments need support of the private sector to make it a reality. The food and agriculture benchmark constitutes an important independent monitoring system that holds companies accountable for their contributions to the sustainable development goals. The partnership of the G7 with the WBA allows for increased transparency regarding what companies are already doing and where further efforts may be needed. The food and agriculture benchmark is instrumental to measure progress on our way to the food system transformation

- Lotte Beck, Senior ESG Manager of Global Equity Investment Team, Macquarie

Voluntary initiatives, such as this and Global Compact, have often proven more effective than regulation because companies align with the values and see the benefits. Often these pledges are more ambitious than public actors, so this is why this collaboration is so important. We need accountability and reporting in place, so that investors can see that companies are also working towards their ambitious goals. If you don't report on progress you don't improve!

- Michael Keller, Chair of the International Agri-Food Network (IAFN)

We need to think of how to bring more companies in. Companies must also enable the business environment and that means knowing about the issues and working with other actors.

- Jean Francois Timmers, Policy and Advocacy Manager for Deforestation and Conversion-free Supply Chains, WWF

It's good to see a holistic evaluation, but there are also levels of urgency such as on the destruction and conversion of ecosystem. We need to focus on topics like this whilst moving towards full transparency.

- Tomislav Ivancic, Global Advisor, Responsible Business Conduct and Agricultural Supply Chains, FAO

The best way for companies to better report is to really understand their impacts and introduce effective due diligence mechanisms. For downstream activities in low-to middle income countries there is more a corporate culture of working alongside development (providing infrastructure, sanitation, and access to water) than sustainability, so we must understand that difference in how we measure and drive impact.