

## Food Security Roundtable in the Dutch Parlement, 5<sup>th</sup> of February

# Position Paper on Food systems, and the role of (Dutch) companies

The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) measures how the 2,000 most influential businesses are impacting people and planet. These assessments are freely available so that, together, we can hold companies accountable for contributing to sustainable development. The benchmarks and methodologies also serve as a roadmap for companies to understand the changes they need to make to put our planet, society and economy on a more sustainable path.

As part of this effort, WBA tracks the performance of the world's 350 most influential Food and Agriculture companies, and assesses their contribution to health and nutrition, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. This assessment will be repeated in 2025, to be published in January 2026. For more information please visit [www.worldbenchmarkingalliance.org](http://www.worldbenchmarkingalliance.org)

### Address food security through food system transformation

WBA understands and addresses food security as an outcome of our current global food system. This means we are focused on transforming our food systems so that it delivers what people need within the limits our planet can carry. Currently, our global food system leaves people hungry and undernourished as well as driving a global obesity crisis.

It's not just a matter of producing more food, it's about producing healthy and nutritious foods, in a sustainable way, ensuring access for everyone to meet their basic nutritional needs. This requires an approach with a central role for farmers and a focus on consumers.

In our global food system farmers and consumers are connected through markets. These markets are in turn dominated by large companies at every stage of the value chain. This is why we can't transform our food system without these companies transforming.

### The Netherlands is home to 16 keystone companies in the food system

The Netherlands, as a major producer and exporter of food, is home to 16 of the world's most influential food and agriculture companies. With many others out of the list of 350 food and agriculture companies having major operations in the Netherlands. They span all segments of the value chain, from input manufacturers to commodity producers and retailers.

### Companies with Dutch HQ can do much more to contribute to a more sustainable food system

While some of the 'Dutch' companies are top performers, the majority of are 'middle of the pack' or 'laggards'. DSM ranked in the top 10 overall, and Ahold Delhazie, Heineken, FrieslandCampina and IDE Peet's made it to the top 50. Ten companies (Nutreco, Viterra, Parlevliet & Van der Plas, Vion, Agrifirm, Louis Dreyfus Company, Cooperatie Coforta, Van Dre Group and De Heus) scored below 24/100, meaning that they didn't make it to the top 100. The average score of the 16 Dutch companies included in our benchmark is 21.3/100 – higher than the global average of 17.4/100, but lower than companies in the UK (33.6/100), Switzerland (26.2/100) or the average of European companies (21.6/100).

## **Several Dutch companies are doing relatively well on greenhouse gas emissions, but lag on other environmental indicators**

Around half of the assessed Dutch companies performed well on disclosing and reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Alarmingly, some key producers of agricultural commodities and animal protein which have relatively high emissions, such as Louis Dreyfus Company, Cooperatie Cforta, Cosun, Van Drie Group, De Heus and Parlevliet & Van der Plas scored “0” on this indicator. Companies’ efforts on issues such as ecosystem conversion, soil health, water withdrawals, food loss and waste, and use of plastics, fall short of what is needed.

## **Regarding nutrition and social inclusion, Dutch companies are falling short of peer companies in other countries.**

Eleven companies are making efforts to increase the availability of nutritious foods by improving the nutritional quality of the products they offer – but even these efforts are relatively small compared to their global peers. Dutch companies are particularly poor performers on disclosure and action towards key social indicators like child labour, forced labour, living wage, and living income. Our assessment suggests most companies are ill-prepared to comply with upcoming EU legislation.

## **Recommendations for the Dutch Government**

1. Continues support for corporate sustainability regulation at the EU level, including CSDDD, EUDR and CSRD. These regulations will have a big effect on the operations of food and agriculture, and are likely to drive improvements in the sustainability performance of large companies. Given the importance of these companies we expect this will improve the overall sustainability of our food system, including reduced emissions as well as the improvement of livelihoods of farmers around the world.
2. Support organisation like IDH and Solidaridad that are in a position to work with Dutch and companies on sustainable agriculture in key commodities and regions. There and other Dutch organisations have built up significant knowledge and capacity that are supporting companies in making the transition to more sustainable and inclusive forms of agriculture.
3. Instal regular high-level dialogue with Food and Agriculture companies HQ and/or with significant operations in the Netherlands on their sustainability performance. This will give government a better insight into the state of play, creating a direct feedback loop to policymakers and vice versa. Ideally, these high-level dialogues will include representatives from civil society and academia.