



INVESTOR COALITION ON FOOD POLICY



INTRODUCTION

Investors are increasingly aware of the material financial risks – systemic, direct and transitional – associated with a failure to make healthier and more sustainable diets affordable and accessible for everyone. The Investor Coalition on Food Policy currently consists of over 30 investors with over £6tn assets under management or under advice.

The Coalition exists to harness the power of the investment community to engage with government(s) on food system related issues. The focus of the Coalition is advocating for well-designed regulation and standard setting to promote greater transparency and accountability, as well as changing food policy and business practices, all of which is required to support the creation of a healthy, sustainable and affordable food system.

The Coalition was initially formed in response to the UK's National Food Strategy¹, a farm to fork review of England's food system, as it was recognised that investors were not a part of the multi-stakeholder dialogue about how the recommendations could be implemented. The initial focus of the Coalition has been in the UK but there are plans to expand the focus globally in the coming months and years.

THE DILEMMA

The food system is responsible for up to a third of global GHG emissions² and is one of the principal drivers of biodiversity loss, with agriculture responsible for 80% of global deforestation³. The World Health Organization has also declared anti-microbial resistance, driven in part by overuse of antibiotics in livestock production, to be one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity. Between 702 and 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021, yet two billion people are living with obesity or overweight globally and one in five deaths are associated with poor diet⁴. For example, two-thirds of the UK population now have overweight or obesity.

Foods classified as healthier (such as fruit and vegetables) are often more expensive per calorie than foods high in fats, sugars, and salts (HFSS), with this price differential having increased over the last couple of years. This exacerbates health inequalities between richer and poorer households; families on lower incomes spend more of their income on food, are more vulnerable to food price shocks, and have less access to affordable, nutritious food.

If left unmanaged, these issues facing the food system will result in direct and systemic risks for the economy, society and investors. There has been a recent rise in people reporting economic inactivity due to ill-health⁵; for instance, rising levels of obesity are impacting the workforce due to increased sick leave and time off for treatment of chronic disorders linked to obesity. The rising incidence of obesity-related disease is placing a significant burden on already stretched health services. For example, the current annual cost of obesity in the UK alone is an estimated £58 billion (equivalent to around 3% of the UK's 2020 GDP⁶), accounting for the costs to the UK's National Health Service (NHS) and social care, lost productivity, workforce inactivity and welfare payments.

It is also important for investors to consider direct transition risks, including potential global policy interventions which aim to respond to some of the challenges the food system faces. These include taxes on sales of unhealthy food and drinks, regulation on deforestation and land use conversion and mandatory reporting on greenhouse gas emissions.

In the long-term, healthier foods should also contribute to lower levels of diet related chronic disease, with mutual benefits for society, the nation's health and therefore the national economies. A shift to healthy, sustainable diets will also help to bring our food system within planetary boundaries⁷. The Investor Coalition on Food Policy wants to protect economic prosperity, reduce direct and systemic risks for companies and investors, and ultimately improve people's health and that of the planet.



REASONS TO JOIN THE INVESTOR COALITION ON FOOD POLICY

- Opportunities to engage with, initially, UK parliamentarians and policy makers to ensure the investment sector's voice is heard as part of food policy conversations (as noted above the Coalition aims to take a global focus);
- Access to information, policy insights, and briefings on food system-related issues;
- Learning, knowledge-sharing and collaboration opportunities with colleagues in the sector and other key stakeholders;
- Opportunities to influence food systems transformation;
- Being an industry leader by showing a commitment to prioritising healthy, sustainable and affordable food systems.

GOVERNANCE

The Coalition is convened and resourced by The Food Foundation as the secretariat and overseen by an advisory group of core investors. The advisory group is supported by a broader Coalition of investors and NGOs who also play a role in the underlying working groups which focus on specific topics.

The secretariat:

- Organises advisory group meetings which are held online quarterly, with a review in 2023 to decide whether the schedule is appropriate. Advisory group meetings will be kept to one hour and focused on the core strategy for the Coalition as well as any reactive opportunities for investor engagement with government(s).
- Aims to convene the full Investor Coalition once a year in person and once a year online, to support opportunities for in-person networking. This will include an annual meeting to review impact, progress and strategic direction.
- Organises Working Group meetings, approximately quarterly and held online.

ADVISORY GROUP

Rathbone
Greenbank
Investments



Guy's &
St Thomas'
Foundation

Investing in a
healthier society



Working groups (initial, new working groups may be established over time) meet quarterly:

1. Mandatory reporting

- Involvement in the UK Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP).
- Coordinating investors' response to any scaling back of the UK Government's 2020 obesity strategy.

2. Articulating risk and opportunity

- Focused on better articulating the direct and systemic risks, and opportunities, that food system issues pose for investors.

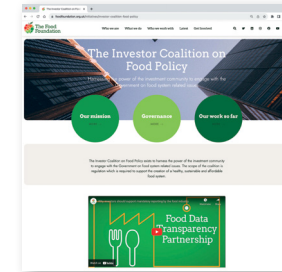
PRINCIPLES THAT MEMBERS OF THE INVESTOR COALITION ON FOOD POLICY COMMIT TO:

- **Actively work towards and incorporate a sustainable food system** which delivers health and wellbeing for all and protects our planet, in investment decisions, research and analysis, engagement and/or require any asset managers investing on our behalf to do likewise. This includes improving our own reporting to increase our transparency and accountability.
- **Leverage and harness the power of your organisation to engage with government(s)** on food system related issues. This includes advocating for mandatory reporting for businesses operating across the food sector.
- **Work collaboratively and share knowledge with investors and other stakeholders** across the thematic areas of health, sustainability and affordability in the context of engagement with policymakers and broader corporate engagement.

HOW TO JOIN THE INVESTOR COALITION ON FOOD POLICY

If your organisation would like to join the Investor Coalition on Food Policy, you will be asked to:

1. **Complete a short questionnaire (which the secretariat will send to you), including providing contact details and preferences in terms of your engagement with the Coalition;**
2. **Allow your organisation's name and logo to be published on the Investor Coalition on Food Policy page of the Food Foundation's website;**
3. **Agree to the principles set out above.**



Scan here to access the digital version of this document or visit bit.ly/3ZpN4H2



Scan here to view the Investor Coalition on Food Policy video or visit bit.ly/3t41Nv7



References

- ¹ H. Dimpleby, National Food Strategy – Independent Review – The Plan, 2021, www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/
- ² Xu, X., Sharma, P., Shu, S. et al., Global greenhouse gas emissions from animal-based foods are twice those of plant-based foods, *Nat Food* 2, 724–732, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00358-x>
- ³ UN, Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development, 2019, <https://sdgs.un.org/publications/future-now-science-achieving-sustainable-development-gsdr-2019-24576>
- ⁴ FAO, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2022, www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc0639en
- ⁵ The Health Foundation, Is poor health driving a rise in economic inactivity?, 2022, www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/charts-and-infographics/is-poor-health-driving-a-rise-in-economic-inactivity
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- ⁷ WWF, Eating for Net Zero - How Diet Shift Can Enable a Nature Positive Net-zero Transition in the UK, 2023, www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/Eating_For_Net_Zero_Full_Report.pdf