



Food Systems Security

Principles for a Strong Response to COVID-19

COVID-19 Response Program

RAPID RESPONSE PLATFORM • June 2020

Highlights

- WBCSD has developed seven “Principles for a Strong Response” to COVID-19.
- Many WBCSD members and partners are demonstrating these principles in action.

The challenge

The pandemic is prompting dramatic change across all industries. Companies are compelled to respond quickly, often with insufficient information, navigating complex, evolving landscapes and an uncertain future. It is precisely amid this ambiguity that businesses must show strong leadership, prioritizing responsible near- and long-term actions with decisions based in ethical, sustainable and resilient strategies.

Principles of a strong COVID-19 response

As part of WBCSD’s COVID-19 Response Project on Vital Supply Chains, the Rapid Response Platform aims to prioritize specific areas where we need collective action to protect the food supply chain and enable a resilient food system recovery. Through this work we have reviewed the COVID-19 responses by many companies and organizations. Drawing insights from these assessments, and with input from members and partners, we have identified seven Principles of a Strong Response to guide effective, responsible and sustainable business action in the context of COVID-19:

1. Protect employees: Businesses’ initial priority must be ensuring the health of people, families and communities, and creating safe working conditions for all employees. This also includes putting measures in place to protect jobs and healthcare provisions.

2. Build collective leadership and partnerships: Speed and scale are critical to addressing the disruptions in vital supply chains. Collaborating along the value chain and with partners is key, and also facilitates knowledge sharing and strengthens trust.

3. Enhance adaptability and flexibility: Production facilities can be adapted to meet demand surges for essential products and businesses should collect information on the efficacy of their actions.

4. Accelerate producer-focused responses: Farm-level disruptions are causing particularly challenging issues. Businesses should support farmers throughout their value chains including with WHO health guidance, equipment for safe working conditions and financial support packages.

5. Ensure continuous cash flow: Businesses should prioritize cash flow, especially to farmers and suppliers, recognizing that investment is key to supply chain continuity.

6. Support relief efforts responsibly: Noting the widespread impact of COVID-19, and with millions now unemployed, strong business responses include investments and donations toward food programs and relief efforts aligned to the priorities of civil society.

7. Build back better: Responses should align to food system recovery priorities, emphasizing the need for environmental sustainability, societal equity and strengthening resilience.

Solutions & business actions

WBCSD members and partners are demonstrating leadership in the spirit of the seven principles. For example:

- **Employees:** [Compass](#) provided 10,000 free food boxes for its employees, [Maple Leaf Foods](#) is supporting its hourly workers with an additional USD \$80 per week, [Yara International](#) ensured income security for employees and contractors for three months.
- **Partnerships:** Yara has launched "[Action Africa: Thriving Farms, Thriving Future](#)" to support 250,000 smallholder farmers, [Cargill](#) is partnering broadly on relief and recovery efforts and [PepsiCo](#) is collaborating to increase access to nutrition for students now out of school due to pandemic.
- **Adaptability:** [Firmenich](#), [Syngenta](#), [IFF](#) and [Givaudan](#) have dedicated production lines to provide hand sanitizer and [DSM](#) is sharing knowledge on 3D printing to support COVID-19 initiatives.
- **Producers:** [Barry Callebaut](#) supports cocoa farmers with pandemic sensitization training, as does [Olam](#), which also enables mobile payments to farmers.
- **Cash flow:** [Danone](#) is providing support of € 300M to 15,000 small businesses including farmers, suppliers and service providers and [Unilever](#) has extended € 500M of cash flow relief to small and medium-sized suppliers and retailers.
- **Food and essential products relief:** [Kellogg](#) has committed nearly USD \$4 million in relief food and funds and [Nestlé](#) is collaborating with the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies to donate food, medical nutrition products and bottled water to bring relief to those most affected by the pandemic.

We thank members already providing support via secondment, financial support and/or data.

To become involved, or to learn more, contact us: Tony Siantonas at siantonas@wbcسد.org

COVID-19 Response Program

WBCSD has initiated a special call to action for our members, leveraging our combined business expertise to address the COVID-19 crisis and support the critical role of business. As part of this [program](#), three new projects – vital supply chains, return to "normal" scenarios and long-term impacts – are underway with regular updates provided through our channels.

About the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

WBCSD is a global, CEO-led organization of over 200 leading businesses working together to accelerate the transition to a sustainable world. We help make our member companies more successful and sustainable by focusing on the maximum positive impact for shareholders, the environment and societies. Our member companies come from all business sectors and all major economies, representing a combined revenue of more than \$8.5 trillion and 19 million employees. Our Global Network of almost 70 national business councils gives our members unparalleled reach across the globe. Since 1995, WBCSD has been uniquely positioned to work with member companies along and across value chains to deliver impactful business solutions to the most challenging sustainability issues.

Together, we are the leading voice of business for sustainability: united by our vision of a world where more than nine billion people are all living well and within the boundaries of our planet, by 2050.

Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)
www.wbcسد.org