

Code of Conduct Task Force 4 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Report of the third meeting – 29 April 2021

During the third meeting of Task Force 4 on the monitoring and evaluation framework for the first component of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices, members provided initial input around key aspects of the framework. The conversation evolved around the framework format, methods, roles and frequency of reporting. As discussions in T1-3 are progressing, a better understanding can be gained around these aspects.

On the basis of the homework questions, it was again confirmed that associations generally do not collect data or monitor progress on (sustainability) issues that are relevant for the code. This is outside their scope of work and mandate, requiring a high level of resources. Various (specialised) organisations are providing monitoring systems and tools, accountability mechanisms, standard setting and data collection efforts, including OECD, (EPHA) BIA-Obesity, FAO, OECD and WBA. The question was raised how these efforts could support the implementation of the Code, for the first but potentially more for the second component (being outside the scope of the T4 discussions).

Whilst the monitoring framework should be robust, concise and simple, members reaffirmed that all companies, big and small, should have the ability to implement. This is key, as EU level associations, representing a broad membership, have to sign up to the Code. Further, members discussed the (potential) difference between the monitoring systems for the first and second component of the Code. The second (to which individual companies will sign up) being more specific on the outcomes and actual results, while the first should be more broad, focusing on best practices and realistic expectations.

A way for companies and other stakeholders to become committed to the monitoring and reporting of efforts, could be through organizing an annual event to discuss best practices and learnings. This could be added in the code in a subsection. Through such regular cooperation and discussion among industries and stakeholders, progress can be tracked as well as the overall functioning of the Code which could provide input to developing provisions of cooperation with the European Commission. In this vein, it was noted that the monitoring framework will not be set in stone, but evolve over time. This will ensure that the framework is responsive and adaptive to developments relevant for the Code.

Around the frequency of reporting, members noted the high burden for (particularly) SME's if annual reporting would be considered. The monitoring framework could speak of 'at least once every two years', as a starting point.

During the next meeting of task force 4, suggested building blocks for the monitoring framework will be presented and discussed.