Strategic Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food Environment Overview and FY2024 Activities

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Government of Japan (As of March 2025)

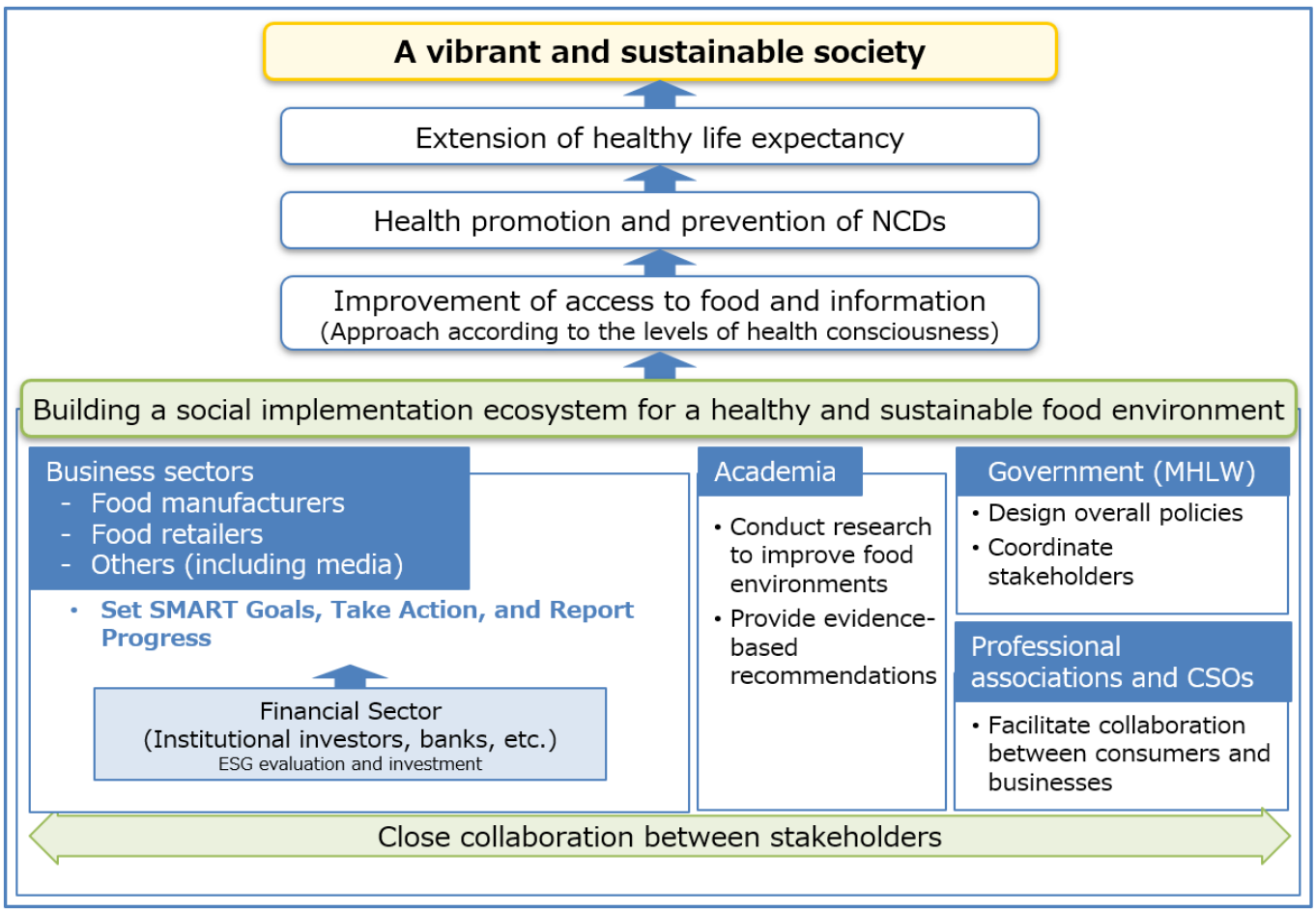
○ In response to the Expert Committee[*1] Report (released in June 2021) and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 (held in December 2021), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) launched the Strategic Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food Environment in March 2022. This initiative serves as a framework to promote healthier food environments through collaboration among industry[*2] , academia, government, professional organizations, and civil society.

○ The initiative recognizes the following as key social challenges: **“Excessive Sodium Intake”**, **“Thinness among Young Women”**, **“Nutritional Disparities Associated with Socioeconomic Status”** and **“Environmental Issues”**.

○ To address these challenges, participating organizations of this initiative set SMART[*3] -based action goals[*4] and work collaboratively across sectors to improve food environments in ways that support healthier choices for everyone. Through these efforts, the initiative aims to extend healthy life expectancy and contribute to a vibrant and sustainable society in Japan and around the world.

Notes
*1 Committee for the promotion of a sustainable food environment in which everyone can be naturally healthy
*2 “Industry” includes a wide range of sectors, such as food manufacturing, food retailers, and media
*3 Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
*4 Each participating business is required to set at least one action goal that contributes to addressing “excessive sodium intake.”

The Vision of the Strategic Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food Environment



Initiative Activities and Expansion of Participating Organizations

In FY2024, the third year since the initiative's launch, several actions were undertaken. These included
・creating opportunities for collaboration among participating businesses
・sharing insights from financial institutions and academic experts
・conducting activities such as site visits to retailers offering low-sodium products and workshops
・initiating engagement with prefectures.
The number of participating businesses increased to 42, including food supermarket retailers, major confectionery manufacturers, television stations, and financial institutions—sectors that play an important role in advancing the initiative.

Activities in FY2024

To support the initiative's continued development, networking events, study sessions, and subcommittee meetings were held among participating businesses.
The main activities were as follows:

Steering Committee

Held three times per year (June, September, and March)

The Steering Committee consists of representatives from participating businesses, academic experts, SDGs/ESG specialists, dietitians, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. It serves as the decision-making body for the initiative's overall direction.
In FY2024, the Committee discussed
・the annual report on overall progress and action goals
・approaches to expanding the number of participating businesses
・strategies for collaboration with prefectures.

Subcommittee for Promoting Action Goals

Held three times per year (July, December, February)

The Subcommittee for Promoting Action Goals consists of academics, SDGs/ESG specialists, dietitians, professional associations, and civil society organizations. It supports the PDCA cycle for SMART-based action goals set by participating businesses, including providing recommendations on goal setting and progress monitoring.
In FY2024, the Subcommittee continued to engage with participating businesses through dialogue and provided practical and constructive advice on setting action goals.

Open Forum

Held once per year (December)

The Open Forum is open not only to stakeholders involved in the initiative—including participating businesses and expert committee members—but also to the general public. At the forum, the initiative's results, including best practices related to action goals, were shared widely. The FY2024 forum featured:
・lectures by academic and financial sector experts
・presentations by participating businesses
・exhibition booths showcasing participating organizations.
Approximately 320 participants attended, including companies interested in joining the initiative or promoting healthier food environments, local government officials, financial sector representatives, and media.

Subcommittee Meetings and Exchange Programs

To promote collaboration and share best practices, the initiative organized subcommittee meetings and exchange programs among participating businesses. Key activities included:
・site visits to retail stores showcasing low-sodium product sections, followed by discussions
・exchanges with academic experts
・dialogue sessions with ESG-related stakeholders to share policy and research trends in health, nutrition, and finance
・development of outreach materials for financial institutions
・workshops for children in two regions using educational materials to promote sodium reduction awareness.

Events Held in FY2024
・Liaison meetings among participating businesses (June, February)
・Subcommittee meetings (August, November)
・Site-visit subcommittee session (November)
・Dialogue session with ESG stakeholders (February)
・Expert dialogue and networking event (August)


Subcommittee meeting


Sodium reduction workshop for children

Participating businesses (in alphabetical order): 42 businesses

*As of March 2025

・Participation in FY2021
Ajinomoto Co., Inc., ASAHIMATSU FOODS CO.,LTD., Houken Corporation Healthup 21 Editorial Department, KAMEDA SEIKA CO.,LTD., Kewpie Corporation, Kikkoman Corporation, Meiji Co., Ltd., Mirutasu (Meal-plus) Corporation, Nichirei Corporation, NISSIN FOODS HOLDINGS CO., LTD., Pasco Shikishima Corporation, PUBLISHER KENGAKUSHA CO.,LTD.

・Participation in FY2022
DANONE INSTITUTE OF JAPAN FOUNDATION, every, Inc., Japan Airlines Co., Ltd., KOKUSAI SHOGYO Publishing Corp., Lawson, Inc., Locoguide Inc., Maruha Nichiro Corporation, Maruyanagi Foods Inc., Muen.com Corporation, NIPPN CORPORATION, Ocean Blue Bird Corporation, Oishi Kenko Inc., S&B FOODS INC., SHiDAX CONTRACT FOOD SERVICE CORPORATION.

・Participation in FY2023
BASE FOOD Inc., First Screening Co., Ltd., House Foods Group Inc., JAPAN MEDICAL HERB ASSOCIATION (JAMHA), Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union, MARUTO CO., LTD., MORINAGA MILK INDUSTRY CO.,LTD., Nutrition Association For Mother and Child, SENIOR LIFE CREATE, Sunplaza Co.,Ltd., Takohachi.Co.Ltd., ZENSHO HOLDINGS CO., LTD.

・Participation in FY2024
Calbee, Inc., Fukushima Central Television Co., Ltd., MUFG Bank, Ltd., York-Benimaru Co., Ltd.

*The companies listed as participating businesses in FY2024 are those that have completed coordination and registration for the prescribed items related to the action goals as of the end of February 2025.