

# Superlist

## Social

# 2026



Supermarkets fall short on ensuring fair pay  
for workers and farmers

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Belgium & the Netherlands  
Edition 2, April 2026



**SUPER**  
LIST 

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# Foreword



**Charlotte Linnebank**

Director  
Questionmark  
Foundation

## Questionmark

Supermarkets play a decisive role in shaping the products on their shelves. Through negotiations with suppliers, they influence not only price and quality but also the conditions under which goods are produced. This creates clear opportunities to better safeguard human rights across global supply chains—an expectation that is increasingly becoming a legal obligation.

Building on the previous editions of Superlist Social (2023 in the Netherlands and 2024 in Belgium), I am pleased to present this follow-up report. We are grateful to Oxfam Novib, Solidaridad and Rikolto for their valuable collaboration, commitment and expertise.

While we recognise the complexity of today's food system and the extensive value chains in which supermarkets operate, this complexity underscores the importance of decisive and coordinated action. Encouragingly, supermarkets are showing greater transparency in identifying human rights risks and supporting joint initiatives in sectors such as cocoa and bananas

The challenge now is to build on this momentum and move toward structural, comprehensive approaches across all product value chains where risks such as underpayment, exploitation, child labour and other human rights violations persist. By embedding robust human rights due diligence into their core business practices, supermarkets can drive meaningful, lasting improvements for workers and communities worldwide.



**Heske Verburg**

Directeur  
Solidaridad

## Solidaridad

In the Netherlands and across Europe, supermarkets are central to the daily lives of nearly every citizen. We buy our daily groceries there, and for many of us it is their first employer—stocking shelves as a part-time job. Every day, we are bombarded with a flood of marketing messages from these retailers. Yet, human rights are strikingly absent from the conversation. And that is quite remarkable. Because on the other side of the world—in the tea gardens of India, the coffee plantations of Uganda, or among the cocoa trees of Côte d'Ivoire—supermarkets may be invisible, but they are incredibly influential. In those places, fundamental human rights, such as a living income and a child's right to education, are at stake every single day. The tea, coffee, and chocolate produced there end up in millions of shopping carts across the Netherlands and Belgium. Why do we hear so little about the people behind these products?

Superlist Social clearly demonstrates that supermarkets are doing far too little to address human rights within their supply chains. However, we also see that change is possible. A cautious movement is emerging—one that we must nurture and strengthen. At Solidaridad, we work toward this every day by partnering with both supermarkets and farmers across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We also keep a finger on the pulse through initiatives like Superlist Social. Is progress being made? The honest answer is: just a tiny bit.



**Thibault Geerardyn**  
Director  
Rikolto Belgium

### **Rikolto**

Supermarkets should and can be an effective driver for positive change within food supply chains. When a supermarket unequivocally commits to fair pay, women’s rights or abolishing exploitation within a commodity, real progress is made in the lives of workers, farmers and their families, and in the ecological health of their fields and environment. This, in turn, leads to more stable supply chains from farmer to customer, which is ever more valuable in an increasingly unstable world. The few good practices highlighted in this report should serve as hopeful, albeit urgent inspiration for supermarkets to take up their responsibility in all supply chains. We, at Rikolto, aim to be a partner in this endeavour. Through transparent and fair business involving all chain actors and relevant governments, we contribute to multiply supermarkets’ potential impact for a fair, healthy and sustainable food system.



**Pepijn Gerrits**  
Director of Pro-grammes  
Oxfam Novib

### **Oxfam Novib**

The results of Superlist Social send a clear and troubling message: change in our food system is possible, but is not being embraced. We celebrate pockets of progress on living incomes in cocoa, but these efforts are not being mainstreamed across other food commodities. Particularly concerning is that supermarket commitments to women’s rights have largely failed to result in meaningful action. Meanwhile, human rights abuses in supermarket supply chains remain widespread.

Oxfam Novib has worked on these issues for decades alongside workers, trade unions, farmers’ organisations and women’s rights groups. We know that supermarkets can have a positive impact in their supply chains, but only when the voices of affected people are central. Supermarkets must step up. Yet the consistently low scores in this benchmark show that voluntary action is not enough. Robust legislation is essential to ensure supermarkets are held accountable for upholding the rights of women, workers and farmers.

## INTRODUCTION

# Supermarkets' responsibility for human rights in their supply chains

Human rights violations in global food supply chains are widespread and systemic. Globally, 3.83 billion people, nearly half of the world's population, live in households that are reliant on agrifood systems for their livelihoods. Many of these people face poverty, increasing food insecurity and growing inequality accelerated by climate change (1). Recent publications report on the human rights violations workers and farmers are facing in global food supply chain. In international coffee supply chains in Brazil, modern slavery is persistent on coffee plantations. The coffee workers face, for example, inadequate hygiene and facilities, absence of employment agreements, and unlawful dismissals (2). On palm oil plantations in Colombia, Ghana and Indonesia, workers are exposed to pesticides in absence of policy for chemical safety and health at work (3). Additionally, Nepali workers are experiencing debt bondage on Greek strawberry farms (4). These are just a few examples that show the extent of the problem.



## Supermarkets' responsibility

Supermarkets, as large players in these supply chains, have both the power and the responsibility to ensure that their business practices and their suppliers do not contribute to violations such as child labour, gender-based violence and discrimination, and low wages and incomes. Under the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, supermarkets need to implement a human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) system, to identify, prevent and stop abuses across their supply chains.

While the issues persist, there are crucial recent developments. The European Union has adopted a set of legislations, including the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), which will make due diligence a legal

obligation in the coming years for all large European supermarkets. Supermarkets in scope for this Superlist Social thus are expected to take responsibility and will soon be obligated to prioritise addressing human rights issues in their supply chains.

### **What is Superlist?**

Superlist is an ongoing international research and advocacy programme initiated by Questionmark. Questionmark is a think tank committed to creating a more healthy, sustainable and fair food system. Through fact-based research, we encourage retailers and governments to drive change, foster collaboration and implement appropriate regulations.

Superlist aims to enable supermarkets to compare their efforts with competitors and learn from best practices and recommendations.

### **About Superlist Social**

Superlist Social 2026 compares the largest Belgian and Dutch supermarkets on their efforts to safeguard human rights, focusing on transparency and accountability, workers, farmers and gender. For each of these issues, supermarkets' policies and reporting were researched. This Superlist Social is a Questionmark project in collaboration with civil society partners Solidaridad, Rikolto and Oxfam Novib, and with the support of ambassadors Fairtrade Belgium and Oxfam België. The supermarkets in scope of this research were determined by the largest market share. For Belgium this includes: Colruyt, Delhaize, Carrefour, Aldi, and Lidl. For the Netherlands this includes: Albert Heijn, Jumbo, Lidl, Aldi, Plus and Dirk. In each country, these supermarkets have a total market share of more than 80%.

The [research methodology](#) for this Superlist was published in September 2025, after consultation with supermarkets, scientific experts, and civil society partners. Data for this research was collected by Questionmark between September 5th and October 31st 2025.

**The [background report](#) provides a complete overview of the underlying data.**

### **Reading guide**

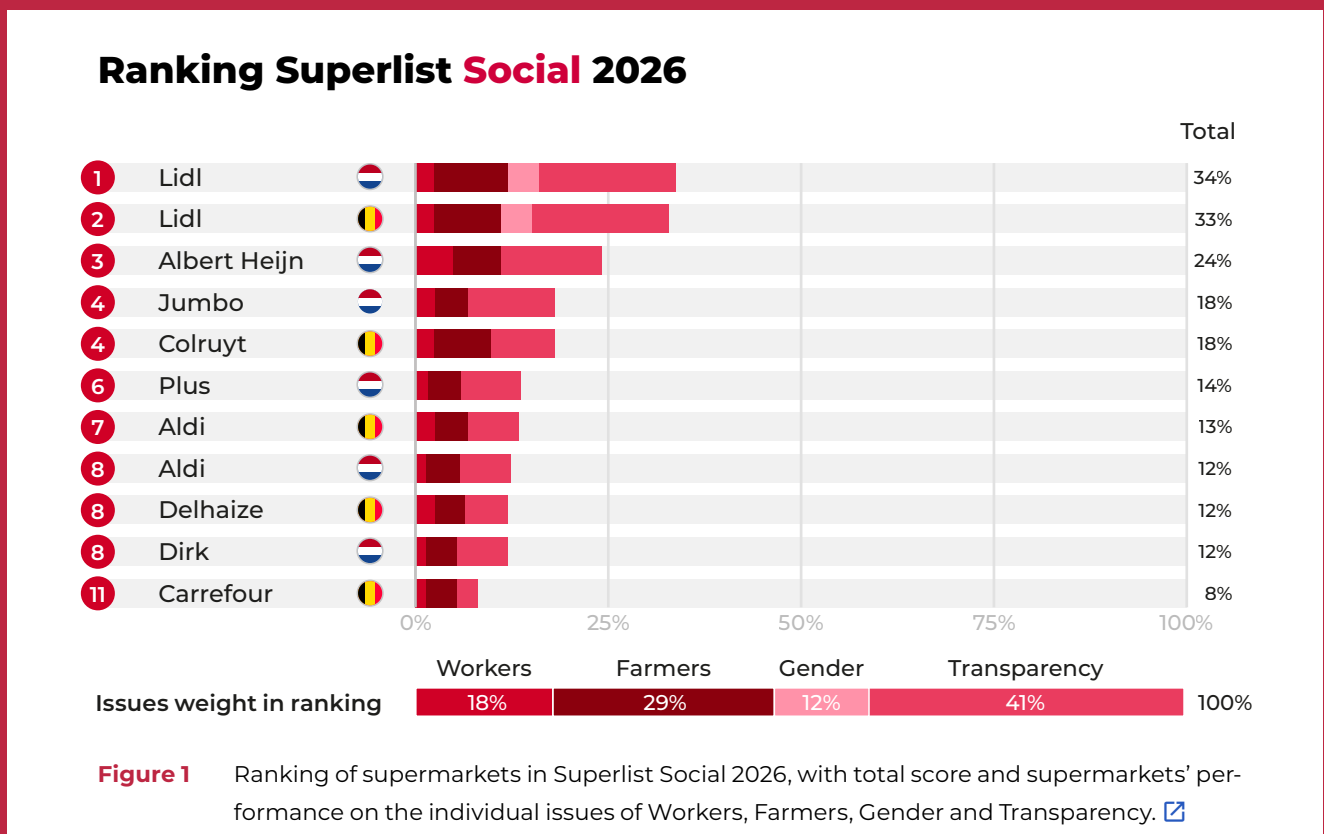
Supermarkets that perform well on a specific research indicator are highlighted in **green**, which means that the mentioned finding counts in the ranking.

Not all supermarkets' measures are extensive enough to count in the ranking. Small steps in the right direction are also worth noting and are therefore marked in **yellow**.

SUMMARY SUPERLIST SOCIAL 2026

# Supermarkets fall short on ensuring fair pay for workers and farmers

While Belgian (BE) and Dutch (NL) supermarkets have become more transparent about the human rights issues in their supply chains, they still fall short on ensuring fair pay for workers and farmers. Supermarkets have been working on ensuring a living income for banana workers and cocoa farmers. Apart from a few promising examples, they have not expanded these efforts to other supply chains with a high risk of poverty and other human rights violations. Supermarkets do not yet have a structural approach to tackle the gender pay gap and other women’s rights issues either. Lidl (BE & NL) did take a step in publishing action plans to improve the position of women in their supply chains. In this Superlist Social, Lidl NL and Lidl BE lead the ranking, while Carrefour (BE) lags furthest behind.



## SUMMARY SUPERLIST SOCIAL 2026

### Supermarkets push for living wage banana workers, hardly any follow up in other supply chains

Both Belgian and Dutch supermarkets strive for a living wage for banana workers in their supply chains. Several supermarkets now claim to have closed their share of the gap between actual wage and living wage for banana workers. But apart from bananas, most supermarkets do not report expansion of their efforts to supply chains of other products. Only Albert Heijn shows support for suppliers of fruits and vegetables in high-risk countries to measure the living wage gap and support in creating an action plan to close it.

### Supermarkets' efforts to ensure living income for small-scale farmers focussed on cocoa

Belgian and Dutch supermarkets are part of multi-stakeholder initiatives to ensure a living income for cocoa farmers. Albert Heijn (NL), Jumbo (NL), Dirk (NL)<sup>1</sup> and Plus (NL) have publicly committed to build on this initiative with concrete plans to ensure a living income for cocoa farmers for all their private label cocoa products within the coming years. In addition to cocoa, Lidl's (NL & BE) Way to Go and Colruyt's (BE) chain projects are the first examples of initiatives for long-term agreements and fair prices for farmers in other supply chains.

### No structural approach for women's rights in supply chains

All supermarkets acknowledge women are paid less than men, but do not publish policy that systematically addresses the issue in their supply chains. Lidl (BE & NL) are the only supermarkets to have published action plans to improve the position of women, for example, to tackle the gender pay gap. Other supermarkets have either not shown any commitments or specific actions, or they have become outdated as no progress has been reported since.

### Most supermarkets transparent about high-risk supply chains

The majority of supermarkets have recently published a broad risk analysis to identify human rights violations in their global supply chains. Jumbo (NL) and Lidl (BE & NL) have conducted multiple complete Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIAs) in identified supply chains with a high risk of violations. Only Lidl (BE & NL) report progress on each of the actions formulated to tackle these violations. In addition, almost half of the supermarkets disclose their current direct suppliers. For several high-risk supply chains, Albert Heijn (NL) and Lidl (BE & NL) published their suppliers up to the farmer.

<sup>1</sup> Dirk's and Plus's commitment applies to their private label cocoa products that contain a minimum of 5 percent cocoa. Commitments from the remaining supermarkets apply to their whole private label assortment containing cocoa.

### SUPERMARKETS IN SCOPE



Albert Heijn  
Aldi  
Dirk  
Jumbo  
Lidl  
Plus



Aldi  
Carrefour  
Colruyt  
Delhaize  
Lidl

Combined market share  
>80% >80%

## Questionmark

### ABOUT SUPERLIST SOCIAL

Superlist Social compares the largest Belgian and Dutch supermarkets on their efforts to safeguard human rights in their supply chains. Superlist is an initiative by think tank Questionmark. This edition is a collaboration with Solidaridad, Rikolto and Oxfam Novib, with support from Oxfam België and Fairtrade Belgium.

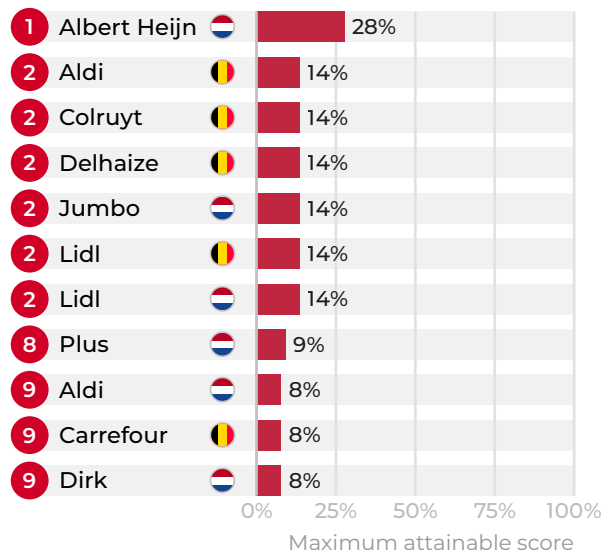
WORKERS

# Supermarkets push for living wage banana workers, hardly any follow-up in other supply chains

**MOST NOTABLE FINDINGS**

- Almost all supermarkets are committed to ensuring a living wage for banana workers. Supermarkets' reporting hardly shows examples of follow-up with other high-risk food products.
- Some supermarkets claim to have closed their share of the gap between actual and living wage for banana workers.
- Albert Heijn supports fruit and vegetable suppliers in measuring and eventually closing the living wage gap.

**Supermarkets' efforts on workers' rights**



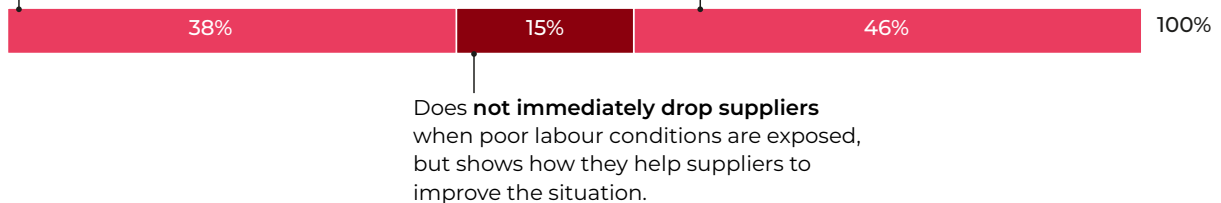
**Figure 2** Subranking on the supermarkets' efforts for the issue Workers. [🔗](#)

**What can be expected from supermarkets toward Workers?**

The supermarket:

**Supports suppliers** to respect human and labour rights and positively **incentivises suppliers** that show progress in labour conditions.

**Is committed to publish the living wage gap** and takes action and **reports on closing the gap** for products with a high-risk of human rights violations.



**Figure 3** Indicators and weight for the issue Workers. [🔗](#)



Photo: Alexa Sedgwick/Oxfam

Globally, 1.23 billion people work in food supply chains, of whom 857 million work in primary agricultural production (20). As a result, the food sector has great potential to contribute to workers' living wages and good working conditions. But in reality, workers' conditions in this sector can be tough: long hours, little to no pay, forced or child labour, dangerous working conditions and poor living conditions are just some examples of abuse workers may face (21).

### **Almost all supermarkets are committed to ensuring a living wage for banana workers**

Both Belgian and Dutch supermarkets are committed to ensuring a living wage for banana workers. In 2019, **Albert Heijn, Dirk, Jumbo, Lidl** and **Plus** in the Netherlands committed to reducing the living wage gap (see Text box 'Living wage') for all their banana volumes by at least 75 percent by the end of 2025 (22). In 2022, Belgian supermarkets **Aldi, Colruyt, Delhaize** and **Lidl** committed to closing the living wage gap for banana workers by 2027 (23). However, supermarkets have hardly expanded such efforts to their other food products, while many workers in other supply chains are still struggling to meet basic living needs.

#### **LIVING WAGE**

A living wage is the income that workers should earn to achieve a decent standard of living for themselves and their families (21). Living wages can help to eradicate many other human rights issues, such as child labour. The living wage gap is the difference between the actual wage and a living wage. Adjusting purchasing practices to enable living wages is also a legal requirement for supermarkets under CSDDD.

### Some supermarkets claim they have closed their share of the living wage gap for banana workers

Following their commitments, several supermarkets publicly state they have enabled banana workers to earn a living wage. Albert Heijn (NL), Lidl (BE & NL), and Plus (NL) have stated they do so by paying a premium (24-26). Jumbo (NL) also indicates it has closed the living wage gap in the banana sector, although this has not been published yet. It is important to note that this covers their own share of banana volumes. Furthermore, it concerns self-reported statements by the company that were not independently assessed. As long as all other supermarkets have not closed their share of the living wage gap, workers on banana plantations are still not guaranteed a living wage. In 2023, IDH (the sustainable trade initiative) reported about the Dutch supermarkets that banana workers were still receiving around a 13 percent lower wage than what would enable workers to have a decent standard of living (22). One in four workers did not receive a living wage. For the Belgian supermarkets, IDH reported that workers were receiving a 15 percent lower wage than a living wage (27), and one in five banana workers did not receive a living wage.

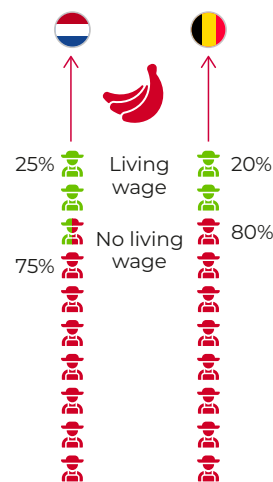
### Albert Heijn supports suppliers in measuring and closing the living wage gap

**Albert Heijn (NL)** supports fruit and vegetable suppliers in high-risk countries in Africa and South-America to measure the gap between the paid and living wage. It also helps suppliers to eventually close this gap by developing an action plan together (28). The AH Foundation contributes to improving living conditions as well and invests in education, health care and housing together with suppliers. **Lidl (NL & BE)** have carried out a training session to identify and prevent child labour in supply chains in Asia, which will form the foundation for comprehensive suppliers training in the future. However, it is unclear which of Lidl's supply chains this affects and whether these are food supply chains.

### Supermarkets aim to support suppliers in improving working conditions






In addition, **all supermarkets** state that they do not immediately drop suppliers when labour rights have been violated, a so-called cut-and-run approach. Instead, they try to help suppliers to improve working conditions (5,29-36). However, none of the supermarkets show how they reward suppliers that show progress in working conditions in the supply chain. Rewards could include preferential

#### WAGE BANANA WORKERS



The percentage of banana workers not earning a living wage for bananas bought in Dutch and Belgian supermarkets (22-27).

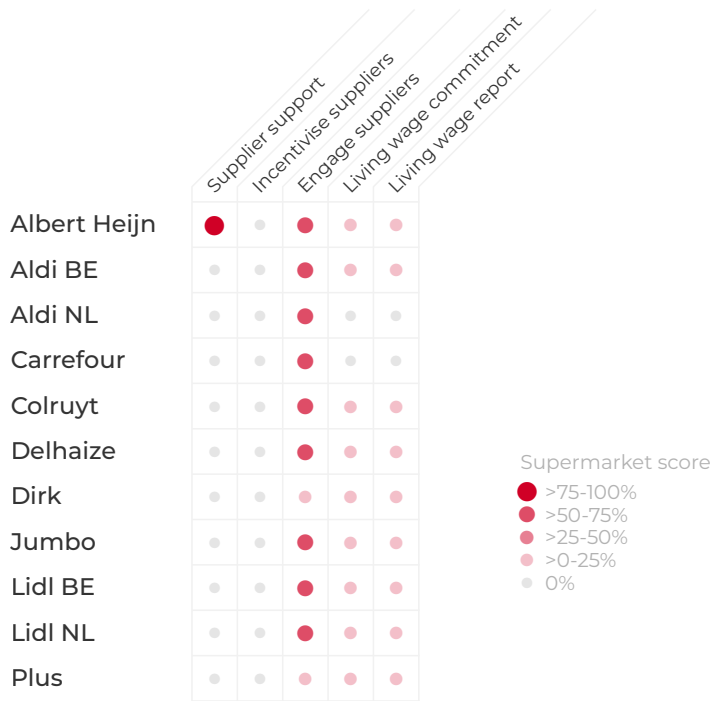
#### HIGH-RISK PRODUCTS

-  Canned tomatoes
-  Tea
-  Shrimp
-  Cashew nuts
-  Orange

Examples of other high-risk products where workers are struggling to meet basic living needs

purchase, more favourable lead time, larger order quantities and preferential payment terms.

### Results indicators Workers



**Figure 4** Distribution of efforts on the indicators for Workers. [🔗](#)

FARMERS

# Supermarkets' efforts to ensure living income for small-scale farmers focused on cocoa

## MOST NOTABLE FINDINGS

- Most supermarkets are committed to ensuring a living income for cocoa farmers.
- Majority of Dutch supermarkets have now made concrete plans to ensure a living income for all private label cocoa farmers.
- Lidl (NL & BE) and Colruyt (BE) show initiatives that ensure long-term agreements and fair prices for farmers in other supply chains.

## Supermarkets' efforts on farmers' rights

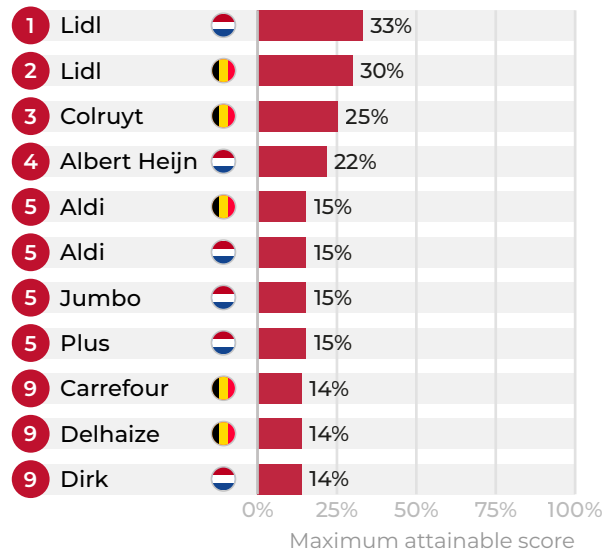


Figure 5 Subranking on the supermarkets' efforts for the issue Farmers. [\[Link\]](#)

## What can be expected from supermarkets toward Farmers?

The supermarket:

Shows how it **ensures long-term agreements and fair prices** that enable a living income and cover costs of production for small-scale farmers.

Is committed to a **fair distribution of value** benefiting small-scale farmers, and discloses the current value distribution for several high-risk supply chains

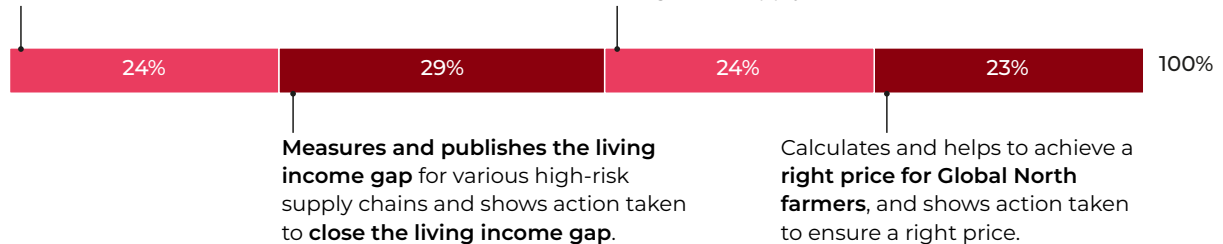


Figure 6 Indicators and weight for the issue Farmers. [\[Link\]](#)



Photo: Nana Kofi Acquah/Oxfam

Some products, such as chocolate and coffee, are produced by small-scale farmers. These farmers are people who, alone or as a community, produce food at a small scale to earn a living. This often involves family labour. As supermarkets aim to keep prices low, supermarkets' buying practices generally push prices and conditions down for these small-scale farmers. These circumstances impede farmers from earning a living income.

### Most supermarkets committed to ensuring a living income for cocoa farmers

Most supermarkets are committed to ensuring a living income for cocoa farmers. In Belgium, **Aldi**, **Carrefour**, **Colruyt**, **Delhaize** and **Lidl** have joined forces in Beyond Chocolate: a partnership formed in 2018 to ensure a living income for cocoa farmers by 2030 at the latest (37). In the Netherlands, **Albert Heijn**, **Dirk**, **Jumbo** and **Plus** are part of the Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (DISCO). DISCO also aims to ensure a living income for cocoa farmers by 2030 (38). **Lidl BE & NL**'s cocoa is covered by the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO).

Commitments are a good first step, but the implementation still requires attention. Progress reports by IDH, the organisation coordinating these multistakeholder initiatives in Belgium and the Netherlands, show that the majority of cocoa farmers do not receive a living

#### COCOA INITIATIVES

DISCO

Albert Heijn, Dirk, Jumbo, Plus

GISCO

Lidl

Beyond Chocolate

Aldi, Carrefour, Colruyt, Delhaize, Lidl

income yet. For the Belgian supermarkets, more than 80 percent of cocoa farmers of whom earnings are known, did not receive a living income (39). For chocolate in the Dutch supermarket shelves, that was 88 percent in 2023 (38).

**Most Dutch supermarkets have concrete plans to support cocoa farmers to earn a living income for private label products**

The majority of Dutch supermarkets have announced plans to intensify efforts for DISCO compliance. Albert Heijn (NL), Dirk (NL), Jumbo (NL), and Plus (NL) have made concrete plans to ensure a living income for farmers for their entire private label product range containing cocoa. This expands focus from several chocolate bars to products such as chocolate chip cookies and chocolate cereal. Lidl (BE & NL) have recently announced to ensure a living income for cocoa farmers for all of their private label chocolate bars in 2026 (40).

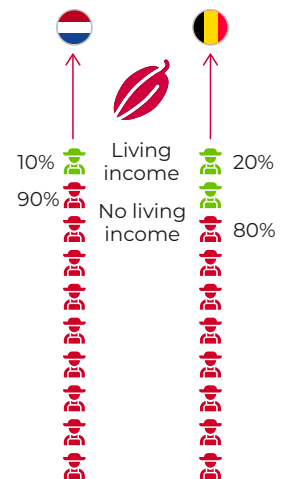
So far, **Albert Heijn (NL), Aldi (NL), Colruyt (BE), Jumbo (NL)** and **Plus (NL)** have already been selling a limited range of chocolate bars that ensure a living income for farmers as part of Tony's Open Chain (TOC) (41). **Lidl (BE & NL)** have also been selling a couple of Way to Go chocolate bars and **Colruyt (BE)** sources from dedicated cooperatives where it pays a price that enables cocoa farmers to earn a living income for all of their Boni chocolate bars (42).

**Lidl and Colruyt take initiatives to ensure long-term agreements and fair prices for farmers outside the cocoa sector**

While supermarkets have been working to ensure a living income for cocoa farmers, many other types of farmers are lacking a living income as well. Supermarkets have not structurally expanded their multi-stakeholder initiative to other products in their product range. However, there are some examples of promising initiatives. **Lidl (NL & BE)** are contributing to a living income and stable conditions for farmers from other high-risk primary products via Way to Go, namely

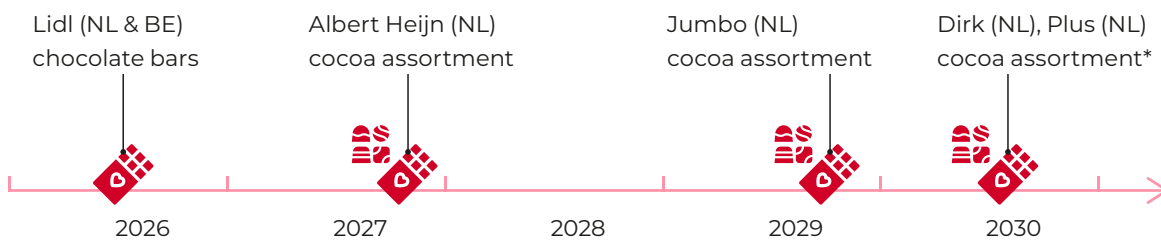
**LIVING INCOME**  
 Living income is the income that small-scale farmers should earn to achieve a decent standard of living for themselves and their families (43). Small-scale farmers are independent entrepreneurs and are not protected by a statutory minimum wage. A living income should constitute a minimum for small-scale farmers in supply chains. Their income should also enable them to build up a buffer, and to make necessary investments.

**INCOME COCOA FARMERS**



The percentage of cocoa farmers not earning a living income for chocolate bought in Dutch and Belgian supermarkets (38-39).

**Cocoa Commitments living income**



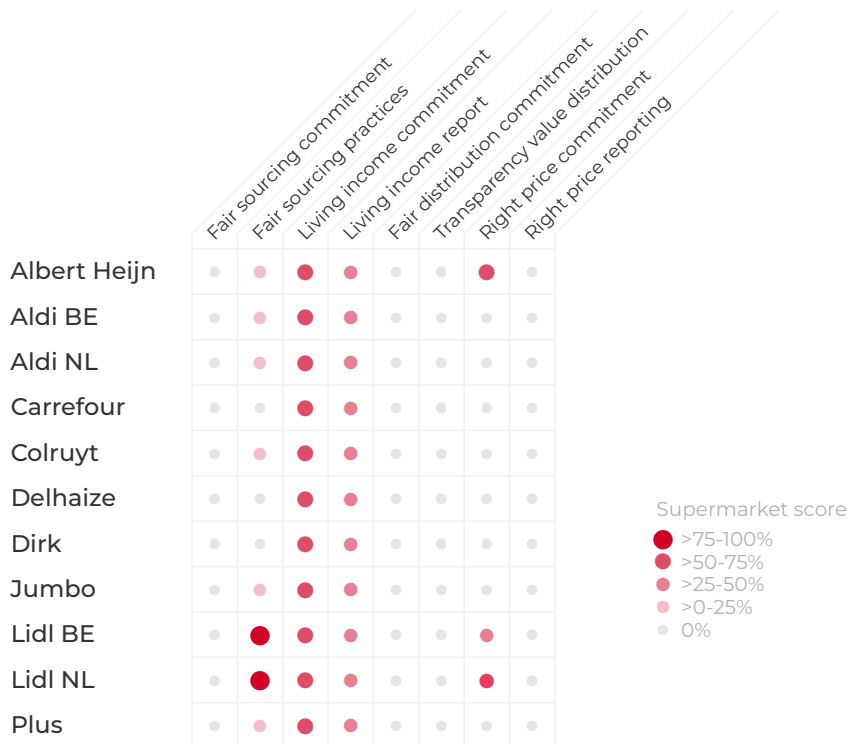
\*for products with a minimum cocoa content of 5 percent

for coffee, cashew and orange farmers (9). Similarly, **Colruyt (BE)** has multiple other international supply chain projects to help improve farmer’s living conditions (43). For example, Colruyt (BE) pays a premium for date farmers in Morocco and secures stable sourcing from cashew farmers in Benin.

**Some supermarkets explicitly commit to help achieve a right price for Global North farmers**

In the Global North, farmers should be able to earn a decent income from their produce as well. Amongst others, supermarkets should assure a right price that covers the costs of production, including labour and investment costs and invest in risk-sharing mechanisms. **Albert Heijn (NL)** and **Lidl (NL)** are committed to this (44,45). **Albert Heijn (NL)** and **Lidl (BE & NL)** are also committed to working with stakeholders such as farmers and farmer cooperatives to calculate and help achieve a right price (5,45,46). None of the supermarkets publish data on the gap between the actual price and the right price that is needed for farmers in a specific Global North supply chain.

**Results indicator Farmers**



**Figure 7** Distribution of efforts on indicators for Farmers. [🔗](#)

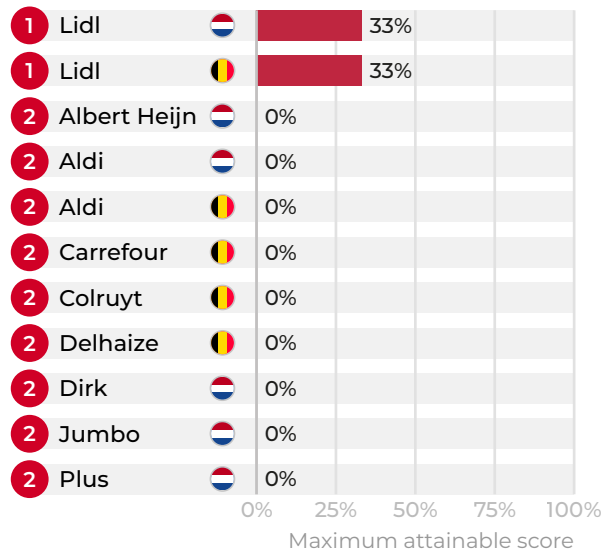
GENDER

# No structural approach for women’s rights in supply chains

**MOST NOTABLE FINDINGS**

- Supermarkets do not systematically address the gender pay gap in their supply chains. Lidl (BE & NL) are the only ones with an action plan to close the gender pay gap.
- Most supermarkets, except Lidl (BE & NL), do not have action plans to tackle violence against women.

**Supermarkets’ efforts on gender rights**



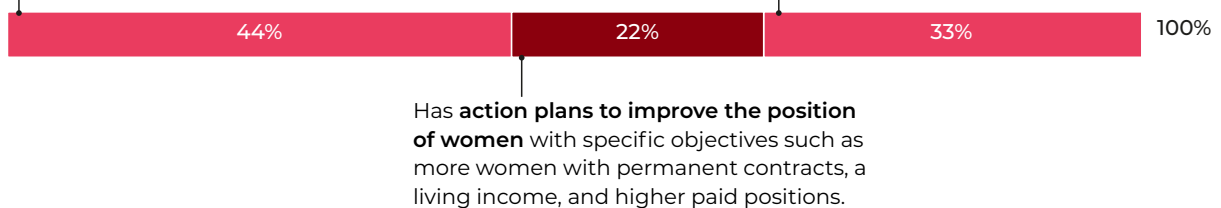
**Figure 8** Subranking on the supermarkets’ efforts for the issue Gender. [↗](#)

**What can be expected from supermarkets on Gender?**

The supermarket:

Is committed to **closing the gender pay gap** in the supply chain and has specific action plans to **address gender-based violence**.

Reports **progress on improving the position of women** in supply chains, sharing challenges and lessons learned.



**Figure 9** Indicators and weight for the issue Gender. [↗](#)



Photo: Mikina Lepcha

Women working in food supply chains, comprising 40 per cent of the global agriculture workforce (47), often have the lowest-paid jobs and often have to fear for their safety. Workplace violence, discrimination and lower wages are examples of abuse women face worldwide (48).

### **Supermarkets do not systematically address the pay gap for women in supply chains**

Although supermarkets acknowledge that women are paid less than men, they do not systematically address the issue in supply chains. **Lidl (BE & NL)** are the only supermarkets to have published an action plan to tackle the gender pay gap (49). Lidl (BE & NL) published the action plan in 2024 and have not reported concrete measures yet. In 2023, Albert Heijn (NL), Aldi (NL & BE) and Jumbo (NL) committed to addressing the gender pay gap in their supply chains (50–52), though none have followed through with reporting their specific actions.

### **Supermarkets, with the exception of Lidl (BE & NL), do not currently have action plans to tackle violence against women**

**Lidl (BE & NL)** are the only supermarkets to have recently published action plans to improve the position of women: one general policy targeted at gender equality in the supply chains (53) and one plan specifically concerning violence against women (54).

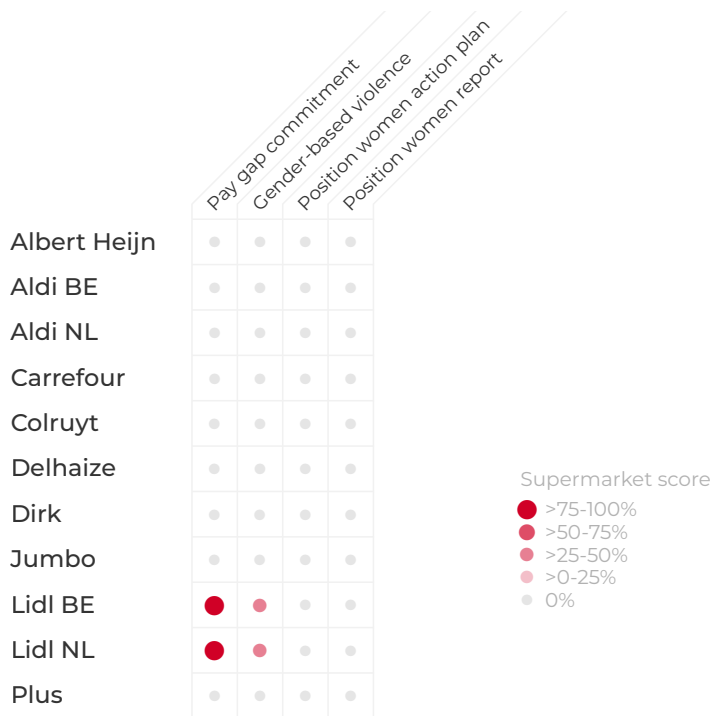
**Aldi (BE & NL)** published an action plan in 2021 concerning gender

#### **GENDER PAY GAP**

The gender pay gap is the difference in average gross hourly earnings between women and men. Globally, women only make 77 cents for every dollar men earn for work of equal value (58). Labour policies are a critical factor in this, for instance policies including as inflexible working hours and limited parental leave.

equality (55), but have not reported on progress since. **Jumbo (NL)** also committed to publishing an action plan in 2023 to tackle gender-based violence in the supply chain (56), but has not realised this. **Albert Heijn (NL)** has now committed to working with suppliers to create equality and diversity plans by 2028 as part of the Positive Produce for People and Planet program (44). Albert Heijn also has a Gender equality & Women’s rights brochure for suppliers, to educate them on the topic of gender equality (57). Other supermarkets do not show wide-ranging action to improve the position of women in their supply chains.

**Results indicators Gender**



**Figure 10** Distribution of efforts on the indicators for Gender. [\[Link\]](#)

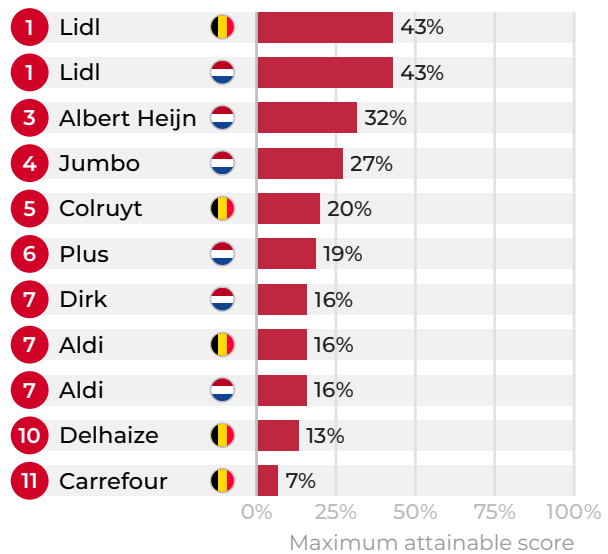
TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

# Most supermarkets transparent about high-risk supply chains

## MOST NOTABLE FINDINGS

- Most supermarkets publish a broad risk analysis of their high-risk supply chains.
- Almost half of the supermarkets disclose an up-to-date list of all their direct suppliers.
- None of the supermarkets have established grievance mechanisms to effectively address complaints throughout their supply chains.

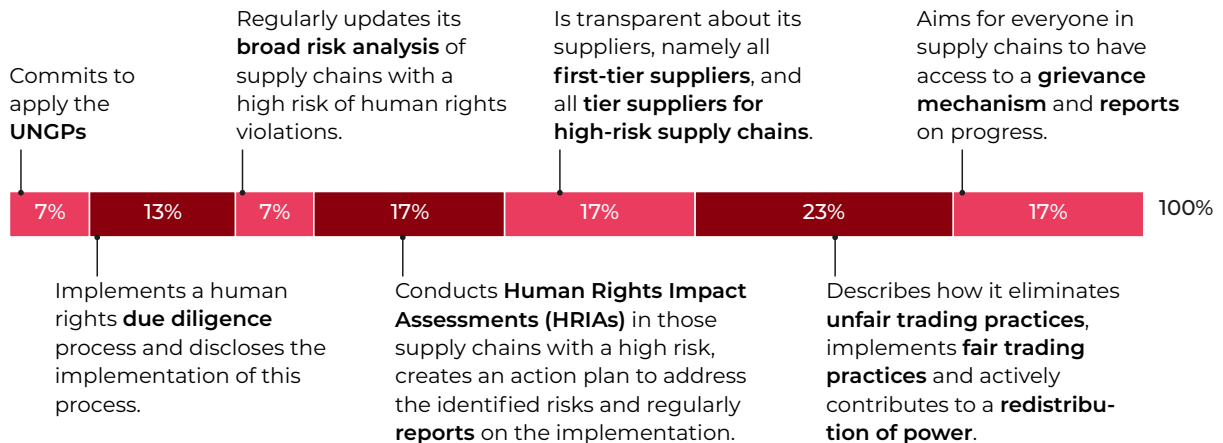
## Supermarkets' efforts on transparency and accountability



**Figure 11** Subranking on the supermarkets' efforts for the issue Transparency and Accountability. [🔗](#)

## What can be expected from supermarkets on Transparency and Accountability?

The supermarket:



**Figure 12** Indicators and weight for the issue Transparency and Accountability. [🔗](#)



Photo: Solidaridad

Supermarket shelves are stocked with products sourced from around the world, many of which originate from regions where risks of human and labour rights violations are high. Retailers must be transparent about how they identify, prevent, mitigate and remediate human rights risks within their supply chains.

**Most supermarkets transparent about high-risk supply chains**

Most supermarkets publish an up-to-date broad risk analysis of their supply chains with high risks of human rights violations, such as extreme poverty, child labour and exploitation (5–10). Since 2023, Albert Heijn (NL), Dirk (NL), Jumbo (NL), Lidl (BE & NL) and Plus (NL) have conducted one or more Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIAs): in-depth studies into those supply chains with a high risk of human rights violations. Only the HRIAs conducted by **Jumbo (NL)** and **Lidl (BE & NL)** are complete, including an action plan with specific focus on the role of the supermarket.

This year, Superunie, the procurement organisation for **Dirk (NL)** and **Plus (NL)**, has published its first HRIA on cashews from Vietnam (11). It is now working on an action plan to tackle the identified violations. Albert Heijn (NL) reports that moving forward, it relies on Ahold Delhaize to conduct HRIAs. Ahold Delhaize is currently working on two assessments, expected in 2026. Aldi (BE & NL) previously pledged to publish 12 HRIAs by 2025 (12), but have not published a new assessment

**BROAD RISK ANALYSIS**

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
|                |             |
| ✓ Albert Heijn | ✗ Aldi      |
| ✗ Aldi         | ✗ Carrefour |
| ✓ Dirk         | ✓ Colruyt   |
| ✓ Jumbo        | ✗ Delhaize  |
| ✓ Lidl         | ✓ Lidl      |
| ✓ Plus         |             |



Examples of supermarkets' supply chains with a high risk of human rights violations.

since 2023. Carrefour (BE), Colruyt (BE) and Delhaize (BE) are yet to publish any assessments.

Following HRIAs, progress reports are crucial to monitor if violations have been mitigated or are being addressed. **Lidl (BE & NL)** are the only supermarkets that are transparent about progress on each of its actions to address human rights violations (9). For example, Lidl (BE & NL) report they have carried out a forced labour prevention training for the supply chain of berries in Spain. **Jumbo (NL)** has also reported progress on its action plans for pangasius from Vietnam and shrimps from Vietnam and Ecuador (13).

**Several supermarkets disclose their direct suppliers**

**Several supermarkets** report up-to-date names and addresses of direct (tier 1) suppliers for their current range of products (14–17). Additionally, **Albert Heijn (NL)** publishes the entire supply chain up to the farmer for fresh fruits and vegetables (14). **Lidl (BE & NL)** disclose

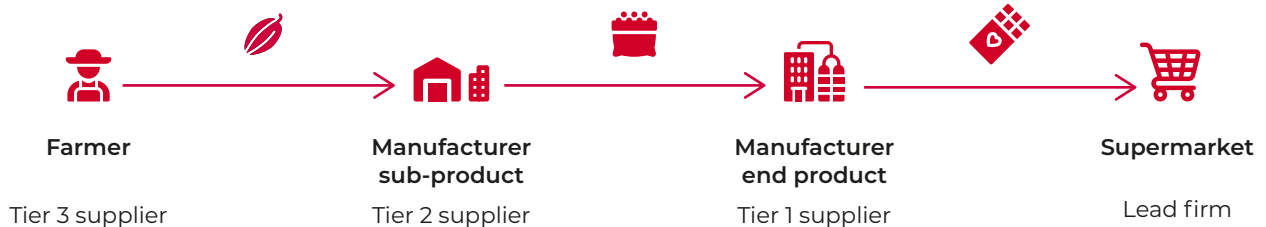
**CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY DUE DILIGENCE DIRECTIVE (CSDDD)**

Supermarkets with more than 5.000 employees and an annual net turnover of over 1.5 billion euros will need to comply with CSDDD (16). The in-scope supermarkets will be required to identify human rights risks in their supply chains and take meaningful steps to prevent and stop abuses.

**TRANSPARENT ABOUT TIER-1 SUPPLIERS**

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
|                |             |
| ✓ Albert Heijn | ✗ Aldi      |
| ✗ Aldi         | ✗ Carrefour |
| ✓ Dirk         | ✗ Colruyt   |
| ✗ Jumbo        | ✗ Delhaize  |
| ✓ Lidl         | ✓ Lidl      |
| ✓ Plus         |             |

**Example of simplified cocoa supply chain**



Simplified cocoa supply chain to indicate the different tiers a product is transferred through from farmer to supermarket. [🔗](#)

all suppliers in the chains up to the farmer for high-risk products: bananas, strawberries and tea (17–19). It remains unknown whether these lists of direct suppliers are complete, but it is likely that some suppliers requested not to be mentioned in the list.

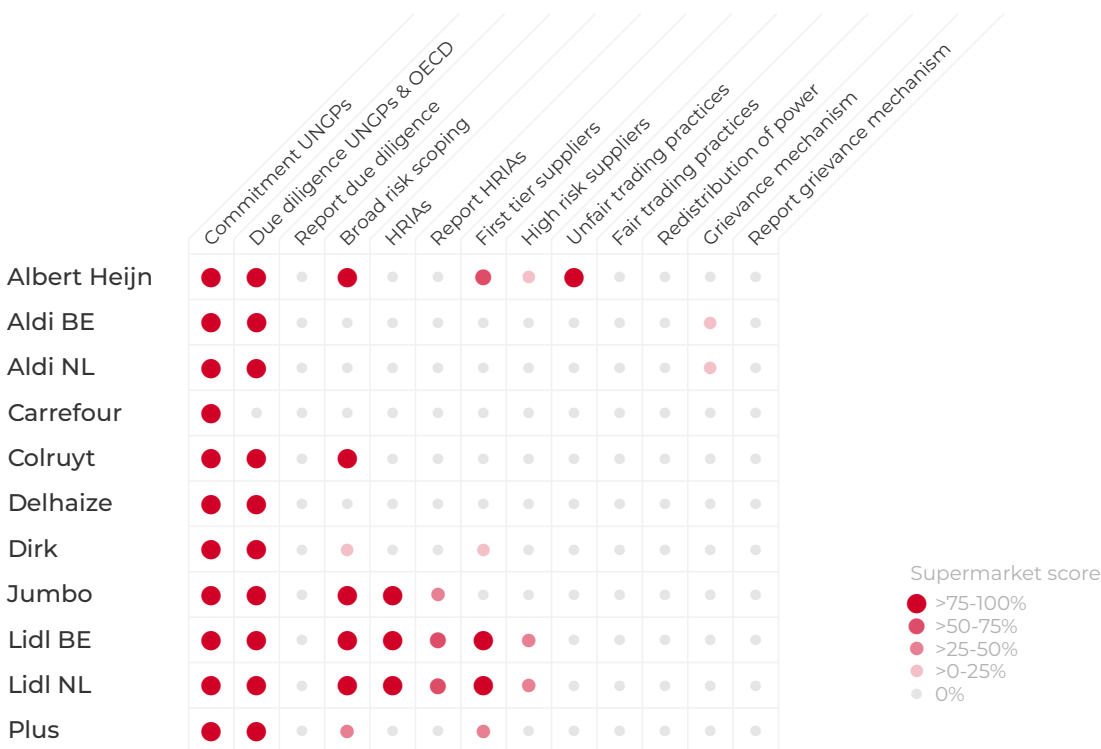
**No effective grievance mechanisms for all high-risk supply chains**

None of the supermarkets have an effective grievance mechanism in place for all their high-risk supply chains. These mechanisms should allow workers and farmers throughout the supply chains to file their complaints, for example about low income or working conditions on the plantations or farms. Several supermarkets have a grievance mechanism for employees, but these are not accessible to all workers and farmers in the supply chains. **Lidl's (BE & NL)** mechanisms are most advanced, since Lidl sets up pilot projects for effective, local grievance mechanisms in various supply chains and reports on progress annually (9).

**GRIEVANCE MECHANISM**

CSDDD requires supermarkets to provide the possibility for stakeholders to submit complaints on human rights and environmental impacts. This grievance mechanism needs to be fair, publicly available, accessible, predictable and transparent.

**Results indicators Transparency and Accountability**



**Figure 13** Distribution of efforts on indicators for Transparency and Accountability.

# Recommendations

Superlist Social aims to provide insight into the efforts supermarkets take to safeguard human rights in their food supply chains. Supermarkets can use the below recommendations as the next steps in respecting human rights throughout all their supply chains, thus contributing to a more fair and sustainable food system. In general, supermarkets should duly implement the OECD guidelines and UNGPs and prepare for CSDDD. As part of that broad human right due diligence process, we highlight a number of most urgent points of attention for supermarkets below.

## Recommendations for all supermarkets

### → **Roll out existing living income initiatives for banana and cocoa workers and farmers in other supply chains.**

The initiatives to ensure a living wage for banana workers and a living income for cocoa farmers show that these lead to specific plans and action. While supermarkets have focused on these product chains, these multi-stakeholder initiatives have not been structurally followed up in other supply chains yet. Coffee could be one of the next supply chains for supermarkets to focus on and to individually commit to ensuring a living income within the whole sector. Like cocoa farmers, coffee farmers are also suffering from extreme poverty. And coffee is one of the world's most popular commodities. Apart from cocoa, Fairtrade also establishes a Living Income Reference Price for coffee – the minimum price that is needed for a coffee farmer to receive a living income – which can be used by supermarkets. In the end, a living income should be structurally included as an element of purchasing requirements for all products.

### → **Set targets in the near future to tackle the gender pay gap in the supply chain.**

All supermarkets acknowledge that women are paid less than men, but do not show a structural approach to address the gender pay gap in the supply chain. A first step to change this is to map the exact pay gap in a supply

chain. It is necessary to establish this and understand what causes this pay gap. Then, publish a (new) action plan with targets in the near future to close the gender pay gap in supply chains and report on progress annually.

→ **Set targets in the near future to tackle gender-based violence in the supply chain.**

While various supermarkets made a commitment to tackle violence against women, no progress is shown. Publish an action plan with specific plans to tackle gender-based violence in at least three supply chains where this has been identified.

→ **(Continue to) conduct Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIAs) in high-risk supply chains and address the identified issues.**

An HRIA should always include an action plan to address the issues identified. Report annually on progress on each of these actions to ensure the HRIAs lead to actual improvement. At a minimum, HRIAs should include:

- all relevant consequences for human rights in the supply chain;
- engagement of relevant stakeholders and especially rightsholders;
- action plans: developed with rightsholders and relevant stakeholders and implemented in a participatory and inclusive manner;
- reporting on the action plan and solutions for the identified issues.
- 

→ **Involve rightsholders in the development and execution of due diligence policy.**

This entails active, regular, and constructive communication with stakeholders, including clear feedback on action plans. Specifically focus on the inclusion of rightsholders, such as workers and farmers. Clearly indicate in the action plans how rightsholders' input has been addressed and record which topic was discussed, when, and with which organisation.

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# Colophon

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# Questionmark

## Collaboration

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