Food is a common thread linking all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), given the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of food systems. The Food Sustainability Index (FSI), developed by The Economist Intelligence Unit with the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition, is a quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model gauging the sustainability of food systems globally across three key dimensions (environmental, societal and economic). The FSI includes three pillars: food loss and waste; sustainable agriculture; and nutritional challenges. The infographic below depicts the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the key food-system indicators included in the FSI. This can highlight the impact of food systems on the 2030 agenda to meet the SDGs.

The FSI allows for comparison between countries and food-system indicators, highlighting best practices that food-system stakeholders—including policymakers, civil society organisations, the private sector, academia and research, and the media—can use to design roadmaps toward more sustainable food systems and ultimately the SDGs. Important drivers of sustainable food systems include education, advocacy and policies.

The composing indicators can be mapped very closely to the various SDGs, as visualised below. The associated SDGs are the ones we think are the most closely linked to each category, but it is not an exhaustive list and the links between food systems and the SDGs remain subject to further study. To explore the FSI, please visit http://foodsustainability.eiu.com/.