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Immediate Release

New 100 questions program seeks public engagement on how data can make food healthier and more sustainable

The 100 Questions' "Food Systems Sustainability" Domain Launched by The GovLab at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering, the Barilla Foundation, and the Center for European Policy Studies.

BROOKLYN, New York, Tuesday, June 1, 2021 – Worldwide, [unsustainable farming practices](#) are damaging both the global environment and the health and wellbeing of people everywhere. At the same time, climate change is making our food systems more fragile, while the global population continues to rapidly increase. Solving both of these challenges requires more sustainable approaches to producing, consuming, and disposing of food.

A new campaign under [The 100 Questions Initiative](#), led by the Governance Lab (The GovLab) at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering, in partnership with the [Barilla Foundation](#), and the [Center for European Policy Studies](#), aims to engage the wisdom of the crowd to drive innovative solutions. The Food Systems Sustainability domain seeks to identify the 10 most important questions that need to be answered to make food systems more sustainable

Data will be integral to understanding where failures and vulnerabilities exist and what methods are needed to rectify them. Yet, the insights generated from data are only as good as the questions they seek to answer. Asking the right questions first is the key to smarter use of data for understanding current and future food systems.

The 100 Questions Initiative starts from the premise that to leverage data in a responsible and effective manner, data initiatives should be driven by demand, not supply. Working with a global cohort of experts, The 100 Questions seeks to map the most pressing and potentially impactful questions that data and data science can answer.

The launch coincides with a call for [bilinguals](#)—experts in both food sustainability and data science—to join a global cohort that will be used to collectively identify the top questions that can be answered

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through [data collaboratives](#), a new form of public-private partnerships that harness data from different sectors for public good.

“In order to design and implement sustainable food systems, we need to better understand what concrete issues to respond to and how to effectively respond to them,” said Andrea Renda, Senior Research Fellow and Head of Global Governance, Regulation, Innovation & Digital Economy at the Center for European Policy Studies. “Data science can be of enormous help in this crucial endeavor for the future of our people, planet and prosperity”

The 100 Questions Initiative approach is uniquely participatory, and engages with experts from all over the world, with various specializations in the food domain, to develop and curate the list of key questions.

“We must tackle agricultural and food-related challenges from an environmental, economic, and social perspective. By using this three-pronged approach, we can better support the health of our planet and the people living on it,” said Anna Ruggerini, Operations Director at the Barilla Foundation. “The 100 Questions Initiative’s participatory approach to demand-driven data initiatives will help us learn from all stakeholders and hear many different perspectives.”

Once the top 10 questions on food systems sustainability are identified, the public will then be asked to vote on which of these questions should be prioritized and solved.

“We observe increasing uncertainty and anxiety around the future of our agriculture and food supply chains. However, we are also living in a digital age that has witnessed the proliferation of data assets and data science methods” adds Stefaan Verhulst, Co-Founder, and Chief Research and Development Officer of The GovLab. “By first identifying the most pressing questions in food systems sustainability, we can more efficiently and responsibly funnel our efforts into answering them.”

Professionals interested in collaborating are encouraged to send an email to contact@the100questions.org or fill out this [form](#). For more information about the 100 Questions Initiative, visit www.the100questions.org, or contact Stefaan Verhulst, lead of the initiative at sverhulst@thegovlab.org.

About the 100 Questions Initiative

The 100 Questions Initiative is presented by The Governance Lab at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering with initial funding support from Schmidt Futures. It is supported by a global advisory board comprising data science and subject matter experts from the public, corporate, and non-profit sectors. Members include Ciro Cattuto, scientific director of ISI Foundation; Gabriella Gómez-Mont, founder and former director at Laboratorio Para La Ciudad; Molly Jackman, leader of Content-Product Data Science and Engineering at Netflix; Vivienne Ming, founder of Socos Labs; Wilfred Ndifon, director of research at AIMS Global Network; Denice Ross, fellow at Georgetown University’s Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation; and Matthew Salganik, professor of sociology at Princeton University. For more information, visit the100questions.org or <https://the100questions.org/faq>

About The Governance Lab at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering

The Governance Lab’s mission is to improve people’s lives by changing the way we govern. Our goal at The GovLab is to strengthen the ability of institutions — including but not limited to governments —

and people to work more openly, collaboratively, effectively, and legitimately to make better decisions and solve public problems. We believe that increased availability and use of data, new ways to leverage the capacity, intelligence, and expertise of people in the problem-solving process, combined with new advances in technology and science, can transform governance. We approach each challenge and opportunity in an interdisciplinary, collaborative way, irrespective of the problem, sector, geography, and level of government. For more information, visit www.thegovlab.org.

About the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition Foundation

The Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition Foundation (BCFN) analyzes the complexity of current agri-food systems and, through a variety of initiatives, fosters change towards healthier and more sustainable lifestyles in order to achieve the Goals set by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). With its public initiatives and scientific research, BCFN provides recommendations to public decision makers and maintains an ongoing dialogue with its stakeholders by providing food related multidisciplinary studies and highlighting best practices; it engages the new generations by developing educational tools and awarding projects by young researchers from around the world; it speaks to people to raise awareness and inspire informed daily food choices; and it awards journalistic excellence in reporting the paradoxes of the current food system. For more information, visit: www.barillacfn.com.

About the Center for European Policy Studies

Founded in Brussels in 1983, CEPS is a leading think tank and forum for debate on EU affairs, ranking among the top think tanks in Europe. With an exceptionally strong in-house research capacity and an extensive network of partner institutes throughout the world, CEPS has amply demonstrated its ability to anticipate trends and to analyse policy questions well before they become topics of general discussion. At CEPS, researchers perform policy research on a wide range of policy areas: from the economy and finance to better regulation, the digital economy and trade, as well as energy and climate, education and innovation, foreign policy and the European integration process, or justice and home affairs. For more information, visit www.ceps.eu.

About the New York University Tandon School of Engineering

The NYU Tandon School of Engineering dates to 1854, the founding date for both the New York University School of Civil Engineering and Architecture and the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute. A January 2014 merger created a comprehensive school of education and research in engineering and applied sciences as part of a global university, with close connections to engineering programs at NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai. NYU Tandon is rooted in a vibrant tradition of entrepreneurship, intellectual curiosity, and innovative solutions to humanity's most pressing global challenges. Research at Tandon focuses on vital intersections between communications/IT, cybersecurity, and data science/AI/robotics systems and tools and critical areas of society that they influence, including emerging media, health, sustainability, and urban living. We believe diversity is integral to excellence, and are creating a vibrant, inclusive, and equitable environment for all of our students, faculty and staff. For more information, visit engineering.nyu.edu.

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