



Best-ReMaP

Healthy Food for a Healthy Future

M4.3 JRC implements food database

Grant Agreement Number 951202

JRC and WP4

21/07/2023

This article was funded by the European
Union's Health Programme (2014-2020)



Contents

Contributors and Acknowledgements	3
Abbreviations.....	3
Executive summary	4
Background	5
The FABLE website.....	6
Methodology and data sources.....	8
Examples of data analyses.....	8
Use of FABLE in different nutrition and food policy areas	10
Facilitating the processed food offer monitoring in Europe	10
Exploring the use of FABLE in other policy areas.....	10

Content of figures

Figure 1 Schematic representation of how FABLE aims to bridge the gap between research outputs and the end-users	5
Figure 2 Overview of the policy context that led to the development of FABLE.....	6
Figure 3 Screenshot of the FABLE Home page	7
Figure 4 Examples of an analysis dashboard	9

Content of tables

Table 1. List of countries and food categories for which data collection was performed during EUREMO and Best-ReMaP.....	8
Table 2. Potential ways of how FABLE could support other policy areas such as protecting children from harmful food marketing and supporting public food procurement	11

The content of this article represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Contributors and Acknowledgements

The preparation of this report was guided by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission.

FABLE is a joint effort of the Health Promotion team (Jan Wollgast, Eva Grammatikaki, Joana Dias, Maria Alice Moz Christofolletti) and the Data Processing and Visualisation team (Enrico Ben, Michele Rovera) of the JRC.F.1 Disease Prevention Unit.

We would also like to thank all those participating in the data collection and management during the EUREMO project and the Joint Action Best-ReMaP Work Package 5.

Abbreviations

DG	Directorate General (European Commission)
FABLE	JRC Food and Beverages Labels Explorer
JA	Joint Action
JRC	Joint Research Centre
NCD	Noncommunicable diseases
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

The *Food and Beverages Labels Explorer* (FABLE) is a fundamental tool in the context of the JA Best-ReMaP. It has been developed by and with the own resources and efforts of the EC JRC in Ispra (Italy), who is a collaborating partner for the JA. FABLE contains general and nutritional information from the labels of packaged foods and beverages in Europe. The JRC maintains the website and provides a user-friendly visualisation tool, and at the same time makes the datasets it hosts publicly available as agreed to by the JA partners (n.b., the data collected within the EUREMO project is free from 3rd party rights and can also be made available via FABLE).

The datasets hosted at FABLE will be accessible to everyone. Data in its raw format will be available, especially for researchers who wish to delve deeper into the dataset. At the same time, data visualisation will ensure that the information is translated for use from policy makers and citizens.

Including the data collected through the WP5 of Best-ReMaP into FABLE is an outcome indicator of the JA and one of the key actions to ensure the sustainability and the long-term use of its outputs. It aims to improve the monitoring of the food offer, and eventually lead to and improve outcomes of product reformulation. Regularly feeding data into FABLE from future data collection rounds at national level, after the conclusion of the activities of the JA Best-ReMaP, can further improve its usability, and inform of the effectiveness of any reformulation efforts.

Further to its use in the policy context of food reformulation, FABLE's scope could be extended to address other policy areas such as protecting children from harmful food marketing and in public food procurement.

Background

High intakes of salt, sugars, total and saturated fats have been linked with higher prevalence of various noncommunicable diseases. However, the actual range of intakes in adults across Europe for all these nutrients of concern is above the recommendations.

According to the WHO, 'reformulation policies for healthier food and beverage products' is one of the NCD Best Buys to tackle unhealthy diets. To monitor the evolution/change, there needs to be a systematic collection of data across EU countries, and it needs to be available to the key stakeholders.

However, currently there is a 'black box': no systematic approach to collect and access data to allow a continuous monitoring of the food supply. Industry reports success stories, with no possibility to verify data independently.

FABLE aims to close this information gap by making data collected on branded food and beverages through EU-funded projects publicly available for researchers, policy makers and the public. Users will be able to interact with, explore and visualise data in an easy way. This will allow for the public monitoring of the food supply across the EU (see Figure 1).

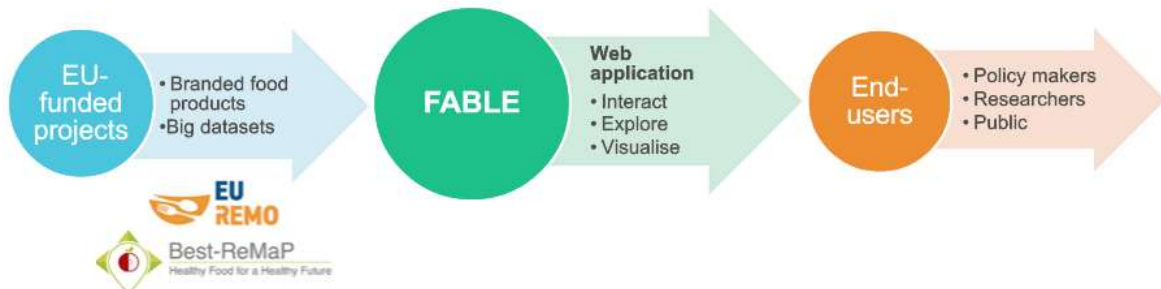


Figure 1 Schematic representation of how FABLE aims to bridge the gap between research outputs and the end-users (© European Commission 2023)

One of the main aims of FABLE is to support Member States and policy makers in the monitoring of the food offer in Europe. In 2019, DG SANTE and HaDEA requested that JRC develops a tool to make publicly available the data collected as part of EU-funded projects on nutritional quality of the food offer, as such a tool was missing. An overview of the policy context that led to the development of FABLE is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Overview of the policy context that led to the development of FABLE (© European Commission 2023)

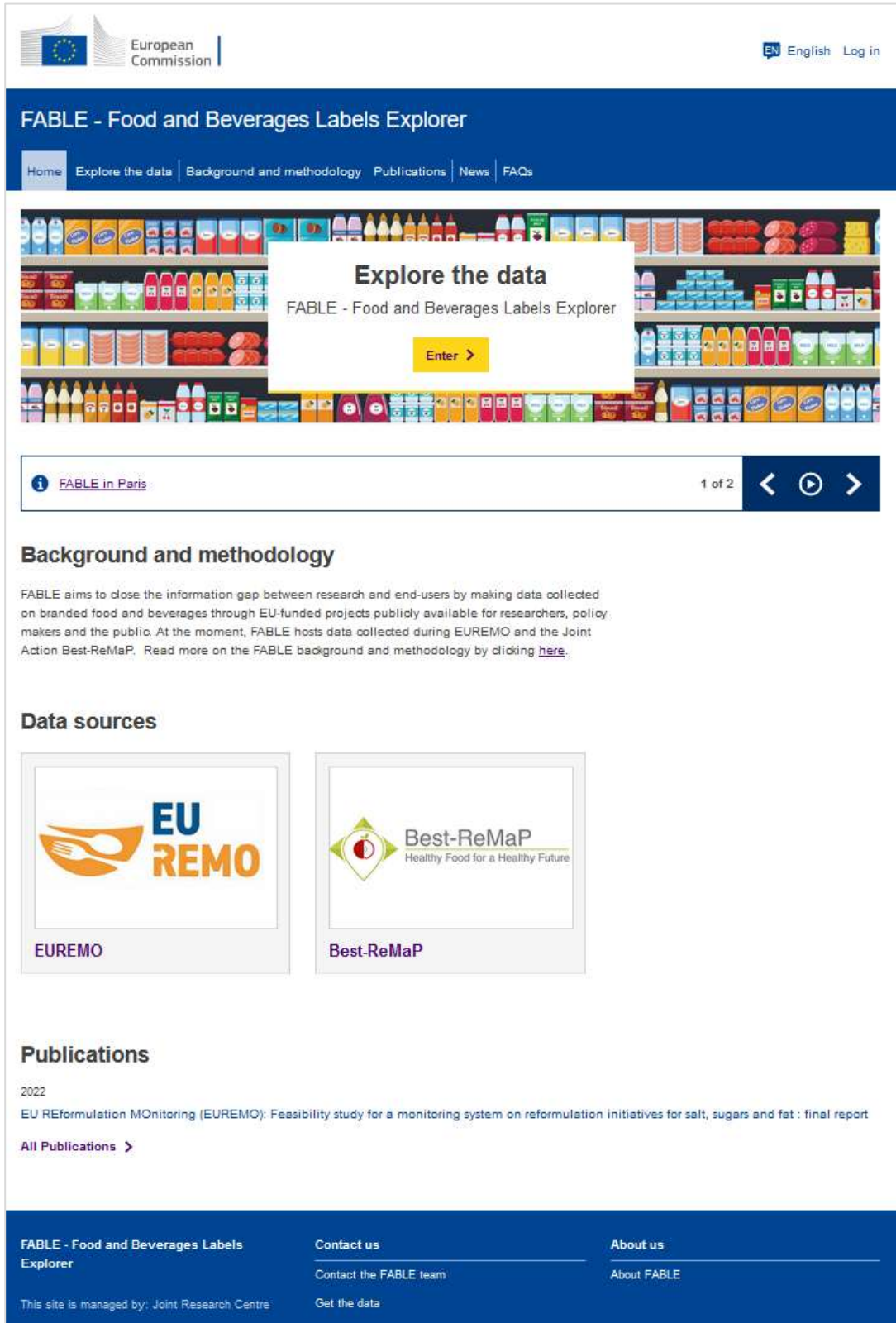
The FABLE website

The FABLE website, that will be officially active from September 2023, is <https://food-labels-explorer.jrc.ec.europa.eu>.

The website consists of the following main pages:

- Home
- Explore the data
- Background and methodology
 - EUREMO
 - Best-ReMaP
- Publications
- News
- FAQs
- Contact us
- Get the data
- About FABLE

Figure 3 provides a screenshot of the FABLE home page.



European Commission

EN English Log in

FABLE - Food and Beverages Labels Explorer

Home | Explore the data | Background and methodology | Publications | News | FAQs

Explore the data
FABLE - Food and Beverages Labels Explorer


Enter >

FABLE in Paris 1 of 2 < >


Background and methodology

FABLE aims to close the information gap between research and end-users by making data collected on branded food and beverages through EU-funded projects publicly available for researchers, policy makers and the public. At the moment, FABLE hosts data collected during EUREMO and the Joint Action Best-ReMaP. Read more on the FABLE background and methodology by clicking [here](#).

Data sources



EUREMO



Best-ReMaP
Healthy Food for a Healthy Future

Publications

2022

EU REformulation MOntoring (EUREMO): Feasibility study for a monitoring system on reformulation initiatives for salt, sugars and fat : final report

[All Publications >](#)

FABLE - Food and Beverages Labels Explorer

This site is managed by: Joint Research Centre

[Contact us](#)
Contact the FABLE team
Get the data

[About us](#)
About FABLE

Figure 3 Screenshot of the FABLE Home page (test version, © European Commission 2023)

Methodology and data sources

At its official launch in September 2023, FABLE will be hosting data on branded food and beverage products across Europe collected through EUREMO and Best-ReMaP. Its design will allow the addition of data coming from future data collection efforts.

The data has been collected using similar methodology for the data collection and using a harmonised nomenclature for the food (sub-)categories across the two projects. More details on the data collection can be found in the Best-ReMaP website on processed food monitoring and reformulation (<https://bestremap.eu/monitoring/>) and in the EUREMO final report (<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2925/308861>).

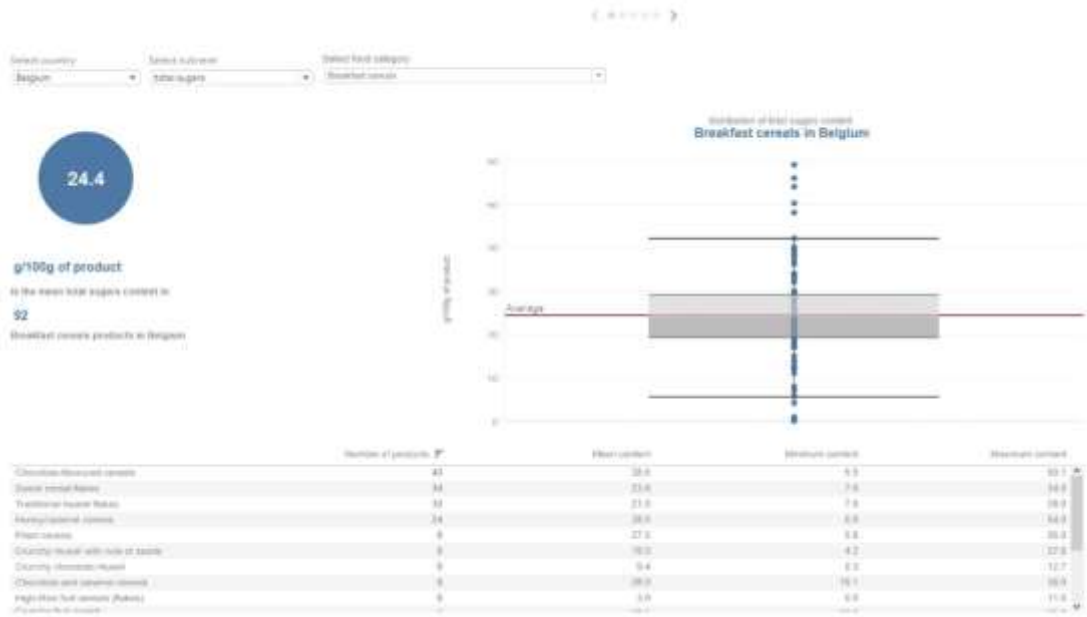
Table 1. List of countries and food categories for which data collection was performed during EUREMO and Best-ReMaP

Project	Food categories	Countries
EUREMO	Fourteen product categories (sugar-sweetened beverages; sugar-sweetened dairy and dairy imitates; breakfast cereals; bread and bread products; confectionary; cakes and biscuits; ready meals and soups; savoury snacks and crisps; sauces and condiments; sugar-sweetened desserts, ice cream; canned fruits and vegetables; meat and fish products; cheeses; and energy drinks and sport drinks).	Sixteen European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom).
Best-ReMaP	Five priority food categories (bread products, delicatessen meats, soft drinks, breakfast cereals and dairy products)	Twenty-one European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia)

Examples of data analyses

Figure 4 presents some examples of the dashboards analysing data from food labels. For these examples, Tableau (<https://www.tableau.com>) has been used; the final graphs will be developed using Highcharts (<https://www.highcharts.com>) so they might be slightly different in terms of “look and feel”.

FABLE - Explore the data



	Grand Total	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	Greece	Hungary	Italy (Liguria)
Cereal flakes with chocolate, nuts	21.1	12.2	22.8	34.8	26.3	22.7	22.4	16.9	29.8	24.3
Cereal flakes with fruit	19.3	22.7	41.8	24.7	11.1	17.9	21.8	12.7	26.8	7.7
Cereals without added sugar (flakes)	21.1	15.9	24.8	19.8	26.8	15.5	37.8	27.9	22.1	24.8
Cereals without added sugar (other)	21.2	30.5	25.5	16.2	35.5	-	-	28.7	4.3	15.8
Chocolate and caramel cereals	29.8	35.7	29.9	26.3	11.3	14.4	-	22.9	15.8	21.3
Chocolate-flavoured cereals	21.5	16.7	28.8	26.8	24.8	23.3	21.8	16.6	23.7	19.7
Crunchy chocolate cereal	19.8	13.4	9.4	27.8	11.3	23.6	23.3	22.5	25.8	3.5
Crunchy fruit cereal	17.7	16.7	29.8	23.8	13.9	15.4	25.8	16.8	15.3	16.7
Crunchy cereal with nuts or seeds	16.7	17.4	16.5	23.4	14.4	7.5	30.9	9.3	18.7	-
Filled cereals	19.4	13.3	27.5	31.8	28.8	22.2	14.8	19.5	11.3	21.8
High-fibre cereals (flakes)	20.8	13.8	-	-	17.9	23.8	18.4	23.8	21.4	11.7
High-fibre cereals (other)	16.7	13.2	38.3	13.3	14.5	16.7	12.8	22.9	15.8	14.9
High-fibre fruit cereals (flakes)	22.7	8.8	3.9	19.7	29.8	33.7	26.1	16.3	15.1	18.8
High-fibre fruit cereals (other)	18.1	29.8	17.8	12.9	-	-	29.8	35.8	3.8	-
Honey/caramel cereals	20.8	19.4	26.5	27.1	22.4	18.8	22.3	21.8	24.5	17.9
Sweet cereal flakes	17.8	26.7	23.8	25.5	18.8	17.7	26.4	21.2	21.5	19.2

Figure 4 Examples of an analysis dashboard (draft version, © European Commission 2023). Values presented here do not correspond to actual values from the different countries and product categories.

Use of FABLE in different nutrition and food policy areas

At its launch, FABLE will only be hosting data collected through EUREMO and data collected as part of Best-ReMaP's work on processed food monitoring and reformulation (WP5). However, there have been discussions with other Best-ReMaP WPs to explore how FABLE could be used to support efforts to protect children from harmful food marketing (WP6) and to support procurement officers in the selection of healthier and more sustainable food options (WP7).

Facilitating the processed food offer monitoring in Europe

FABLE's dynamic dashboard will allow users to explore, interact with and visualise data on the nutritional content of branded food and beverage products across Europe. Several food categories are covered, like bread and bread products, breakfast cereals, soft drinks, and dairy products. FABLE allows for: 1) country comparisons for specific nutrients and food groups, 2) deep dive into each country/food category specific nutrient of concern, and 3) the possibility for making time comparisons on the progress of the quality of the food offer.

Exploring the use of FABLE in other policy areas

There have been discussions during several meetings about potentially extending the scope of FABLE for use in other policy areas. A non-exhaustive list of meetings is below:

- Meeting on EFSA composition database, 27 September 2021
- WP7 meeting, 1 March 2022
- PDMF meeting, 12 May 2022
- WP7 workshop, 12 April 2023
- Plenary Policy dialogue, Brussels, 25 May 2023
- WP4 meetings, monthly meetings in 2023

Table 2 lists some potential ways of how FABLE could support other policy areas such as protecting children from harmful food marketing and supporting public food procurement. Further discussions with Member States on these suggestions are warranted. Several challenges have been identified during the meetings and some of them have been listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Potential ways of how FABLE could support other policy areas such as protecting children from harmful food marketing and supporting public food procurement

Policy area	How FABLE could support this area	Potential challenges
Protecting children from harmful food marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply WHO Europe Nutrient Profile Model across all products collected • Provide the nutritional information for food and beverages included in commercial communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking the correct (version of the) product with each specific commercial communication.
Supporting public food procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply public food procurement criteria across products • restricted area for procurement officers with access to product info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria used for public food procurement are not usually displayed on-pack. A different data collection mechanism needs to be implemented. • Products are usually bought in bulk, so products already collected through Best-ReMaP and EUREMO might not be useful. • Who has the right to use the information provided by producers/retailers, if these are submitted at national level? • Is it feasible to have a centralised database or it is more realistic to establish secure connection of FABLE to national databases?