



Best-ReMaP

Healthy Food for a Healthy Future

D1.1 Meeting minutes of the 1st Policy Decision Making Forum meeting

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Abbreviations

AVMSD	Audio-visual Media Services Directive
DG	Directorate General (European Commission)
EC	European Commission
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
ERDF	The European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	The European Social Fund +
EU	European Union
F2F	Farm to Fork Strategy
HLG (N&PA)	High Level Group (on Nutrition and Physical Activity)
JA Best-ReMaP	Joint Action on implementation of validated best practices in nutrition (R eformulation, M arketing and public P rocurements)
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MS	Member State
NPM	Nutrient Profile Model
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDMF	Policy Decision Making Forum
PPF	Public food procurement
SGPP	Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases (European Commission)
WHO	World Health Organization
WP	Work Package

Aim and scope

Policy Decision Making Forum (PDMF) is a European policy advisory board to the Joint Action Best-ReMaP.

PDMF has three main objectives:

- It is being informed on the JA progress and proposals of the institutionalised and legislative solutions;
- it is being asked to provide critical feedback on the feasibility of implementation at national and EU level, with a view to the achievement of the Best-ReMaP outcome indicators as set out in the Grant Agreement;
- it represents a platform to seek support from Commission representatives to start developing WP level recommendations in the right direction from the beginning.

PDMF mainly focuses on policy level issues, not on activities or tools.

PDMF acts in synergy with the horizontal WPs and WPs 4-7. WP1 is responsible for coordinating and preparing the meeting documents for PDMF, as well as collating the minutes of the meetings. Policy briefs with EU stakeholders will be produced in order to capitalise on the work of the PDMF and expedite implementation; this will be done in conjunction with WP2 and WP4 (responsible for Policy briefs production).

Meeting agenda

13:00 Introduction and welcome from the Best-ReMaP Coordinator

13:10 Introduction of PDMF Representatives

13:30 Presentation of Joint Action Best-ReMaP

13:50 Joint discussion on alignment of Best-ReMaP activities and potential actions in the EU policy environment

14:30 End of the Meeting

Participants of the meeting

Arcella Davide, *European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)*

Aszalós Albert Zoltán, *Semmelweis University, Hungary, Best-ReMaP WP 2 Leader*

Bica Margarida, *Directorate-General of Health of Portugal, Best-ReMaP WP 6 Team*

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Dubois Gaetan, *DG-Agri, Unit G3: Animal products*

Erklavec Urška, *Slovenian Ministry of Health, European Affairs and International Cooperation Service*

Esposito Daniela, *DG CNECT, Unit I1: Audiovisual & Media Service Policies*

Farpour-Lambert Nathalie, *Best-ReMaP External evaluator*

Furtado Artur, *DG SANTE, Unit C1: Health promotion, disease prevention, financial instruments*

Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš Mojca, *National Institute of Public Health Slovenia, Best-ReMaP Scientific Coordinator and WP 7 Leader*

Grammatikaki Evangelia, *JRC, Unit F1: Health in Society*

Gregório Maria João, *Directorate-General of Health of Portugal, Best-ReMaP WP 6 Leader*

Jirousek Lukas, *DG SANTE, Unit C2: Health information and integration in all policies*

Kovács Réka, *Semmelweis University, Hungary, Best-ReMaP WP 2 Team*

Kvas Majer Tadeja, *Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Food and Fisheries Directorate*

Lindström Jaana, *The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Best-ReMaP WP 3 Leader*

Martos Éva, *Best-ReMaP External evaluator*

O'Dwyer Ursula, *Irish Department of Health, Best-ReMaP WP 6 Leader*

Pradalié Nicolas, *Secretariat-General, Directorate E: Citizens, Health, Migration & Security Union, Unit E4: Health, Education & Culture*

Recek Marjeta, *Slovenian Ministry of Health, Department for Health Protection*

Schwierz Christoph, *DG REFORM, Unit B4: Labour market, education, health & Social services*

Silano Marco, *Istituto Superiore di Sanità Italy, Best-ReMaP WP 4 Leader*

Vin Karine, *French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES), Best-ReMaP WP 5 Leader*

Wittmer Jeffrey, *DG SANTE, Unit C2: Health information and integration in all policies*

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1 Introduction and welcome from the Best-ReMaP Coordinator

The 1st JA Best-ReMaP Policy Decision Making Forum (PDMF) meeting was held on 17th of June 2021 at 13:00 (CEST) via Zoom platform. It started with an opening and welcome note from **Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš** (National Institute of Public Health – NIJZ, Slovenia), JA Best-ReMaP's Scientific Coordinator.

It was highlighted that PDMF is expected to be the most powerful tool / mechanism within JA. Depending on the nature of the proposals of the institutionalised / legislative solutions, which the JA will produce, the PDMF is asked to provide critical feedback on the feasibility of implementation at national and EU levels. Everything that is produced within JA is vitally important to be implementable and in alignment with what European Commission (EC) services are doing or planning.

Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš continued with presenting the interlinks of policy and expert cycle, where JA Best-ReMaP is being located within public health, representing an implementing consortium not a scientific one. Nevertheless, JA Best-ReMaP is strongly built on scientific evidence. Through the PDMF, JA Best-ReMaP consortium wants to establish the link with policy to understand where and what is needed to be implementable.

JA Best-ReMaP is strongly embedded project in the interest of Member States (MS). It represents the implementation of the actions recognised and framed by the MS in the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014 – 2020 listed as followed:

- Greek Presidency EU Council conclusions on nutrition and health in 2014, with the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014 – 2020; Dutch Presidency EU Council conclusions on reformulation with the Roadmap for implementation of reformulation actions by different stakeholders in 2016; Maltese Presidency EU Council conclusions, introducing public procurements of foods as the public health issue supporting healthy nutrition in 2017; and Austrian Presidency Roadmap on Food systems;
- the follow up to the JANPA, representing the sustainable implementation of the joint efforts;
- based on the transparently selected best practices. Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases (SGPP) started the collection of best practices (65) in 2017/18. Twelve best practices were selected by High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical activity (HLG N&PA) and presented at marketplace at Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Ispra in 2018. Three best practices were selected by members of the HLG N&PA.

The three best practices selected were joint in the core Work Packages (WP) of JA Best-ReMaP:

- **WP 5** – EU Harmonised Reformulation and processed food monitoring
- **WP 6** – Best practices in reducing marketing of unhealthy food products to children and adolescents
- **WP 7** – Public procurement of food in public institutions – a pilot EU approach

Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš concluded her introduction with a short presentation of JA Best-ReMaP management structure with an emphasis on characteristics, objectives and working methods of PDMF, which is the main policy advisory board to the JA.

2 Introduction of PDMF Representatives

After the introduction and welcome from JA Best-ReMaP Coordinator, the presentation of PDMF Representatives followed.

Representing the EC, the following Directorates-General (DG) were present at the meeting:

DG SANTE:

Mr Artur Furtado, Deputy Head of Unit C1: Health promotion, disease prevention, financial instruments,

Mr Lukas Jirousek, Policy Officer – SNE at Unit C2: Health information and integration in all policies

Mr Jeffrey Wittmer, Assistant Policy Officer at Unit C2: Health information and integration in all policies

Secretariat-General:

Mr Nicolas Pradalie from Directorate E: Citizens, Health, Migration & Security Union, Unit E4: Health, Education & Culture

DG-Agri:

Mr Gaetan Dubois, Market Officer at Unit G3: Animal products

DG CNECT:

Mrs Daniela Esposito, Policy Officer at Unit I1: Audiovisual & Media Service Policies

DG REFORM:

Mr Christoph Schwierz, Deputy Head of Unit at Unit B4: Labour market, education, health & Social services

JRC:

Mrs Evangelia Grammatikaki, Scientific /Technical Project Officer at Unit F1: Health in Society

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA):

Mr Davide Arcella, Team Leader of Exposure Team at Evidence Management Unit (DATA)

Representing the current EU Presidency, the following Ministries were present at the meeting:

Slovenian Ministry of Health

Mrs Marjeta Recek, Head of Department for Health Protection

Mrs Urška Erklavec, European Affairs and International Cooperation Service

Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food

Mrs Tadeja Kvas Majer, Food and Fisheries Directorate

The meeting was observed by JA Best-ReMaP external evaluators: Mrs Nathalie Farpour-Lambert and Mrs Éva Martos.

3 Presentation of Joint Action Best-ReMaP

After the introductions of PDMF Representatives, the JA Best-ReMaP was presented. Core Work Packages were described first, followed by Horizontal Work Packages.

3.1 WP 5: EU Harmonised Reformulation and processed food monitoring

Karine Vin, WP 5 Leader presented Work Package 5, which is led by ANSES, France. Its main aim is to share and to promote the best practices on how to implement a European sustainable monitoring system for processed food reformulation.

The fact that the consumption of processed / ultra-processed food is increasing all over the EU is well known. There is a lack of information on the nutritional quality of the food offer. It is therefore necessary to develop databases at the branded / subcategories of product level to be able to have a precise overview of the quality of the food offer and the outcomes of the reformulation efforts.

What WP 5 is offering is **the implementation of a reformulation monitoring tool at the country level**. Consortium partners involved in WP 5 have decided to focus on 5 food groups (bread products, delicatessen meat, soft drinks, breakfast cereals and dairy products), which are the main contributors to higher intakes of salt, sugar and high saturated fat especially among children. During the two snapshots, there will be nineteen countries participating in data collection.

It was highlighted that WP 5 activities will contribute to a huge gain of knowledge on the nutritional quality of the food offer, creating a virtuous circle where reformulation is encouraged and implementation of thresholds by the MS is possible.

Karine Vin concluded her presentation by addressing the PDMF Representatives with the following question: How to align the activities with the policy development in food reformulation to enable the countries to implement / continue with the standardised monitoring?

3.2 WP 6: Best practices in reducing marketing of unhealthy food products to children and adolescents

Ursula O'Dwyer, WP 6 Leader presented Work Package 6, which is led by Irish Department of Health, and Directorate-General of Health, Portugal. Its main aim is to explore, develop and share the best practices on how to implement effective policies to reduce marketing of unhealthy food products (food and non-alcoholic beverages) to children and adolescents (up to 18 years).

In EU childhood obesity is a major public health challenge and the food environment does not make it easy to make healthy food choices. There is the usage of the techniques that appeal to children and parent's efforts to support healthy choices is hampered. This all makes children more vulnerable, therefore broader societal commitments and actions are needed (*Marketing of food and beverages. JRC 2019*).

WP 6 key areas aim to restrict marketing practices that promote HFSS foods, namely **the development of an appropriate nutrition criteria (an EU coordinated Nutrient Profile Model), the development of the EU wide comprehensive marketing monitoring protocol, and the development and enforcement of Codes of Conduct.**

The impact of WP 6 activities will work out as the support for healthy eating habits of children to carry into adulthood, change reality of a HFSS diet to a healthy diet and shifting the balance away from damaging children's health.

Ursula O'Dwyer concluded her presentation by addressing the PDMF Representatives on how they can help them to maximize the impact mentioned above.

3.3 WP 7: Public procurement of food in public institutions – a pilot EU approach

Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš, WP 7 Leader presented Work Package 7, which is led by the National Institute of Public Health, Slovenia. Its main aim is to contribute to the higher quality of menus in public institutions where children gather, by assuring transparent quality of the procured foods, in the (selected) public institutions in the interested MSs, and in the long-term, at the national/regional levels and at the EU level as well.

As children spend almost a third of their day in kindergarten or school and consume a large part of their daily energy intake during this period, the types of educational environment may impact on the development of childhood obesity. In addition, lower risk of childhood obesity is associated by nutritionally regulated school environment, where a transparent and quality-oriented procurement system is necessary (*JRC, 2017*). At an estimated €82 billion that goes to this system annually, influencing the quality of the food would be important.

The policy behind is based on EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020 followed by the Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC Text with EEA relevance. Slovenia is sharing the good practice of implementing the exemption (20% of food can be procured directly through short food supply chains while supporting the local sustainable food supply), based in the developed public procurement system where the quality criteria are implemented with food groups categorisation using computerised tool. Supporting strategies are Farm to Fork Strategy and its legislative framework, Green public procurement legislation and EU Beating Cancer Plan.

WP 7 would like **to build knowledge** in PFP through the **joint public procurement procedure**, create **a network of national focal points** for PFP and link it in health in all policies with health sector, define **policy solutions** for improved implementation of PP directive and compose **the Joint EU Framework for Action** on PFP in public settings. By this, it is foreseen the **food choices for children would improve**. That could positively contribute to the healthy life years, based on the changes in obesogenic environments, supporting the prevention of obesity.

Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš concluded her presentation by addressing the PDMF Representatives on how to prepare recommendations for a joint policy EU Framework for Action on food procurements in public settings, that it would be useful and implementable on national levels.

3.4 WP 4: Sustainability and Integration in National Policies

Marco Silano, WP 4 Leader presented Work Package 4, which is led by Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy. Its main aim is to foster the transfer and integration of the results and outcomes of the core WPs into national and European policies.

The fact behind the WP 4 is that several public health documents issued at European level in the last 5 years, call for urgent and coordinated actions aimed to offer to all European citizens, especially children, healthy and nutritious foods, making the healthy choice the easy choice. Food reformulation, public procurement in school canteens and regulation of advertising are the most referred initiatives in these documents, to achieve the goal of a healthy food offer widely available.

Marco Silano exposed the policy solution documents, programs and strategies that are available so far as a very important public health documents: Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, EU4Health, European Council conclusions, The Farm to Fork Strategy, The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee.

The key event to achieve the aim of WP 4 will be the EU level policy dialogues, where the EU institutional stakeholders will be mapped and involved. The methodology will include the collection of the results and conclusions from core WPs (WP5, WP6 and WP7), the alternatives/modifications to the existing policies will be proposed and the new recommendations (templates, toolkits...) will be drafted.

Marco Silano concluded his presentation by addressing the PDMF Representatives on how to make the participation to policy dialogues events attractive for the EU policy makers and institutional stakeholders and how to transfer the conclusions of the core WPs into the EU nutritional and other relevant policies and implement them.

3.5 WP 3: Evaluation

Jaana Lindström, WP 3 Leader presented Work Package 3, which is led by The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland. Its main aim is to ensure that JA is implemented as planned and that it accomplishes the objectives as defined in the Grant Agreement.

Therefore, the ultimate purpose of WP 3 is to support the other WPs in their work and in achieving their objectives. With the ongoing monitoring of the activities, outputs, timelines and qualities, WP 3 is helping all Project Partners to evaluate and direct their work. Equally important is also the evaluation of JA's outcomes and impacts. This will represent the short and long-term results of the JA Best-ReMaP.

The objectives of WP 3 are to monitor the implementation and to measure its impact. Both components will be based on internal self-assessments of the activities and impacts, as well as on an external evaluation. For both aims, a set of indicators with supporting data collection methods will be finalised.

Jaana Lindström concluded her presentation by addressing the PDMF Representatives on how would they rate the likelihood of JA Best-ReMaP having impact on EU policies and national policies, processed food reformulation, marketing of unhealthy foods to children and adolescents and public procurement. PDMF Representatives were also addressed on how would they rate Best-ReMaP's potential impact on the diet of children and adolescents, child and adolescent obesity rates, reducing inequality and its fulfilment of children's rights.

3.6 WP 2: Dissemination

Albert Zoltán Aszalós, WP 2 Leader presented Work Package 2, which is led by Semmelweis University, Hungary. Its main aim is to facilitate coherent, effective and sustainable external and internal communication of the Joint Action and to ensure that the stakeholders and the wider audience of the action is aware of its objectives, activities, results and deliverables.

To achieve its aim, the following dissemination activities are being held and channels used: **2 promotional movies, social media** – Facebook and Instagram (in preparation) campaigns and involvement of influencers for reaching the general audiences, **website** with lots of visual and educational materials: www.bestremap.eu, **7 press releases, 6 newsletters, leaflet** about the JA.

The methodology for the 24 national stakeholder events was presented, where the support, planning and structure play the key role.

Albert Zoltán Aszalós concluded his presentation by addressing the PDMF Representatives on two topics referring to the selection of key questions from WP topics for discussion and to updating policy relevance at the time of event.

4 Joint discussion on alignment of Best-ReMaP activities and potential actions in the EU policy environment

After the presentation of JA Best-ReMaP the PDMF Representatives were kindly asked to reflect on how to align JA Best-ReMaP's activities in the fields of food reformulation and processed food monitoring, reducing marketing of unhealthy food products to children and adolescents and public food procurement in public institutions with the potential actions in the EU policy environment.

Mrs Daniela Esposito, DG CNECT started the discussion with the clarification on [EU's Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#), which does not regulate the definition of nutrient profiles. It regulates only advertising related to audio visual media. She proposed to clarify how JA Best-ReMaP sees the connection between AVMSD and NPM. She also recognised the importance of sharing best practices among MSs, however raising the attention to the facts that the ministries responsible for AVMSD are not the ministries of health and health issues are not the subject of the AVMSD. Within Best-ReMaP, it is important to avoid any confusion especially when talking about implementation of the AVMSD. The Contact Committee and ERGA (the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services) already deal with the implementation of the AVMSD in MSs. Having an exchange of best practices and helping in better understanding at the MSs level can be useful, with the objective of not creating confusion.

Margarida Bica, Directorate-General of Health of Portugal explained that they are aware of AVMSD not regulating the definition of nutrient profiles, however AVMSD mentions the [WHO Regional Office for Europe nutrient profile model](#) as the basis and that it is important for the countries to implement it. In the WP 6, a protocol with recommendations for the transposition of the AVMSD will be developed and will include a proposal for a nutrient profile model (NPM), based on the WHO NPM (as identified in the AVMSD). This will be tested or piloted by the participating MSs. The aim of WP 6 is to support countries in the AVMSD transposition having the WHO NPM as the basis.

Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš, National Institute of Public Health of Slovenia highlighted the experience from Austria, Portugal and Slovenia implementing the AVMSD, where not having clear guidelines made the implementation more difficult. With the usage of NPM the implementation is easier. In Slovenia the regulator of AVMSD is Ministry of Culture and in the process of the AVMSD 2009 revision transposition it was decided to add the specific Paragraph, defining the guidelines in the frame of NPM prepared by Ministry of Health. Clearly defined NPM is also helpful for the producers so they can know exactly what they will be able to market and what not. This leads to the opportunity or could stimulate the food reformulation efforts in a way that is encouraging for the producers to produce healthier food. She added that WP 6 project partners will be carefully addressing the link between AVMSD and NPM.

Mrs Tadeja Kvas Majer, Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food explained that in Slovenia the food industry already has self-regulatory measures for food companies on marketing for soft drinks, milk and bakery products. This is connected with the new [EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices](#), which was also mentioned in the presentations. She also exposed the importance of Slovenian good practice in the field of public food procurement, that is covered within Best-ReMaP WP 7 activities, representing the strong cooperation between Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and Ministry of Health and other different relevant ministries, Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other stakeholders. Joining forces from different sectors within multisectoral working groups can represent a strong joint effort, bring together different perspectives and make effective policy approaches. Slovenia is bringing that well established multisectoral action as the good practice to the JA.

Mr Artur Furtado, DG SANTE expressed that it is very inspirational to see this cross-sectorial work because it is very needed and not always present in practice. The examples that were given on how to transpose the AVMSD or on the agricultural sector are very important for other MSs to see how it was done in practice and then replicate good practices and adjust them. Best practices are not only inspirational but very concrete. Mr Furtado exposed that all of this work aims directly at the need of the citizens. Better food needs to be offered at our supermarkets, people have to have better choices, the canteens need to operate better, giving healthier nutritional options to our kids and the protection from aggressive marketing is needed. The interventions presented are the implementation tools that are both effective and cost-efficient, as proved by the evaluations from OECD, WHO, previous Joint Actions and from practical experiences of MSs, that did the implementation in the past. Mr Furtado highlighted

that the key for additional success is to uptake at the national level beyond what was already done. If the MSs decide to take the developed good practices forward this will be a definition of success. JA will be also providing concrete practical tools for the implementation of some EU initiatives and policies like [Farm to Fork Strategy](#). The great added value of this JA is the help and mutual support to other countries with concrete examples of how to do it, based on the past experience of successful MS - allowing to avoid some of the mistakes and replicate wins.

Mr Christoph Schwier, DG REFORM reflected on questions regarding the sustainability of the implementation. He exposed the importance of *green digital transformation* and *economic recovery*, that is socially fair and that does not increase inequalities, as two main themes in the EU that will probably dominate the agenda for the next few years. If JA Best-ReMaP wants to ensure the sustainability to a higher degree, it is valid to question how it can be linked to those two big themes. By establishing that link, Best-ReMaP would reach the decision makers, in particular the fiscal decision makers. Related to that is also the question on how does Best-ReMaP link to other policies, mentioning the fiscal policy as the vital one. As an example, he exposed taxation and ministries of finance, who are working on better monitoring of their budgetary expenses. Indicators such as childhood obesity could be translated into economic burden. Making the link with the fiscal and economic perspective would be important for more successful implementation. In the light of the sustainability plan, Mr Schwier also exposed the question on linking the JA proposed policy solutions with EU funds such as The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and The European Social Fund + (ESF+). He mentioned that those funds could be the opportunity to take the Best-ReMaP work up further, especially where “traditional” funding of individual member state initiative could be advanced by exploring the opportunities of funding one initiative supported by more member states. He concluded that the multidisciplinary nature of Best-ReMaP is excellent and something for all to learn from.

Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš, National Institute of Public Health of Slovenia added that since the beginning of the call a lot of new strategic documents were released, therefore Best-ReMaP is already and will further need to flexibly adapt. That will also enable to bring on board green digital transformation agendas. Additionally, M. Gabrijelčič presented the collaboration that Best-ReMaP has already established with OECD in the context of their Best Practice Project that aims to develop a Guidebook for policymakers with guidelines to select, implement and evaluate best practice interventions in public health. Another aim of the Best Practice Project is to undertake case studies of best practice interventions targeting NCDs. Within it, OECD will collaborate with JA Best-ReMaP by undertaking economic analyses of best practice interventions. Best-ReMaP interventions will be assessed by five best practice criteria: **E**ffectiveness, **E**fficiency, **E**vidence-based, **E**quitability and **E**xtension to the target population. Cost-effectiveness analysis of scaling up and transferring JA Best-ReMaP will be undertaken by OECD SPHeP-NCD microsimulation model.

Mr Gaetan Dubois, DG-Agri said that it was interesting to follow on complexity and multidisciplinary nature of Best-ReMaP. For the [EU School Scheme](#), they are starting to launch the evaluation part for the public review. It is expected to be done by the end of 2023 with the objective to build also new policy options. Taking into account the coverage of EU School Scheme and mentioning the COVID-19 impact on children, DG-Agri is interested in data,

knowledge and evidence from the Best-ReMaP side. The reviewing process of EU School Scheme is being done with an open mind. For example, both the scope of eligible products and the design and scope of the implementation could be reviewed, opened and discussed taking into account the complexity of linking health, diets and sustainable diets, whose potential contradiction is evident in food products of animal origin. Inclusion of EU School Scheme within the JA Best-ReMaP could be discussed via bilateral meeting with the individual WPs.

Mr Nicolas Pradalie, Secretariat-General exposed the interesting cross-sectoral approach that Best-ReMaP is aiming to achieve. The topics that JA Best-ReMaP is covering are very close to the work of Unit E4: Health, Education & Culture of Secretariat-General, especially the link between the food policy and health. The selection of three Best-ReMaP Core Work Packages (WP 5, WP 6 and WP 7) is very interesting and it is encapsulating the main priorities within this link. It is definitely going into direction of the work that is expected so that the priorities are covered.

Mr Lukas Jirousek, DG SANTE offered to present any useful data and proposals stemming from the work of the JA or provided by WP Leaders at a number of interservice consultations, in particular related to agriculture. By his opinion, proposals could be better received when presented not only as the challenge and the state of play but it is indispensable to offer the solution to be able to move forward. Best practices shared in the future could be presented at the Common Market Organisations meetings where representatives of ministries of agriculture could be made better aware of Best-ReMaP's work. He added a comment regarding the EU School Scheme, stating that DG Sante is supportive to the healthy scope of eligible products that are being distributed to children across EU or to devote a certain amount of the budget to the educational accompanying measures that would focus on educating children about healthy diets. In this respect the work done under Best-ReMaP WP 7 could play a huge role in shaping of the future agri-health policies, such as foods purchased by the schools and others.

Mrs Evangelia Grammatikaki, JRC expressed the importance of different sectors coming together because all Best-ReMaP topics are interrelated. This JA has the potential to have a great impact but some of it (such as childhood obesity) will only be observed in the long-term. Therefore, shorter-term outputs (such as change in policy or adoption of the tools developed by the JA) should be defined to measure the impact this JA is sure to bring.

Mr Davide Arcella, European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is working mainly in the area of nutrition and food safety, slightly away from the area of health and policy. Nevertheless, the EFSA Comprehensive European Food Consumption Database that was created mainly for food safety targets could present a possible area to be connected with the Best-ReMaP activities and objectives in the area of health. EFSA sees the participation in PDMF as a good learning opportunity for future actions.

Mr Artur Furtado, DG SANTE shared his final thoughts on positive feedbacks from all meeting participants and on the openness of the services from different areas to collaborate.

Mr Lukas Jirousek, DG SANTE complemented on the usefulness of this meetings to bring everyone together and being a great example on how to break silos. The work being done under the JA Best-ReMaP could have a huge impact on some crucial policies.

5 End of the meeting

Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš concluded the meeting by thanking all for their positive feedback, their inputs and wrapped up additional challenges that need to be addressed within the JA in the future months and years.

The Best-ReMaP Coordination Team will think on how to create more opportunities to meet more often in-between the annual PDMF meetings. The 1st JA Best-ReMaP Policy Decision Making Forum (PDMF) meeting ended at 14:50 (CEST).

6 Evaluation of the meeting

In JA Best-ReMaP WP 3 is responsible for the evaluation of the project, encompassing the monitoring of project processes and the achievement of the Best-ReMaP outcome indicators as set out in the GA, and the evaluation of the project impacts. The PDMF is a high-level group of experts on how policymaking in EU projects works best, with a good understanding of the topics covered in the Best-ReMaP. The WP 3 aims to engage the PDMF members in appraising the potential impacts of the JA on EU and national policy level, and their likelihood of leading to changes in food environments and childhood obesity rates in Europe. In addition, impacts on inequalities and fulfilment of children's rights will be explored. This evaluation will be conducted during each of the three PDMF meetings, in order to discern trends in perceptions. The WP 3 subcontracted external evaluators who are invited to take part in the PDMF meetings as observers complemented the evaluation by giving their feedback on e.g. the comprehensiveness and general atmosphere of the meeting discussions.

6.1 Objectives

In this paper, WP 3 presents the results of the first PDMF meeting, that was held on 17th of June 2021 at 13:00 (CEST) via Zoom platform. As this was the first PDMF meeting, the evaluation of the achievement of the JA Best-ReMaP outcome indicators as set out in the Grant Agreement was not addressed. Instead, the evaluation was focused on the expectations of the PDMF members and the general atmosphere of the meeting.

6.2 Methods

Design: Survey study on expectations.

Data were collected on participants' expectations at the end of the PDMF meeting with an online poll. The link to the questions was shown in the chat window of the online meeting system. It was not possible to answer to the questions after the end of the meeting.

Setting and participants: PDMF online meeting included representatives of the Secretariat-General, DG SANTE, DG REFORM, DG-Agri, DG CNECT and JRC, representative of EFSA and representatives of the current Presidency – Slovenian Ministry of Health and Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. In addition, Best-ReMaP WP Leaders and external evaluators participated to the PDMF meeting.

The WP3 Leader informed the PDMF members about the poll in advance during her brief meeting presentation. The PDMF members were asked to reflect the questions raised by the WP Leaders in their presentations and discussions during the meeting.

Measures: The following questions were presented: How would you rate of JA Best-ReMaP's impact on [score for each: 1 (impact unlikely) – 6 (impact very likely)]

- EU policies
- national policies
- processed food reformulation (improving processed food nutritional quality)
- marketing of unhealthy foods to children and adolescents
- public procurement
- the diet of children and adolescents
- childhood and adolescent obesity rates
- reducing inequalities
- fulfilment of children's rights.

Results are expressed as mean, median and range.

In addition, two external evaluators of the Best-ReMaP made notes about the PDMF meeting concerning general impression on discussions, atmosphere and significance of the meeting.

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Results of the poll

The online poll was completed by 7 respondents.

Of all the themes, the PDMF participants were very confident that Best-ReMaP will have an impact on national and EU policies. Impacts on food environments (processed food reformulation, marketing to children, public procurement) were considered slightly less likely, but still in average more often likely than unlikely. Impact on childhood obesity rates was considered the least likely (considering the short timeline of the project). The question on obesity was aimed to inquire likelihood of longer-term impacts, however that was not specified in the wording of the question. The capacity of Best-ReMaP to advance societal equality and the fulfilment of children's rights was also rated relatively modest by the respondents.

Table 1 Expectations towards Best-ReMaP impacts

Impacts on...	Mean	Median	Range
EU policies	4.9	5	4-6
National policies	5	5	4-6
Processed food reformulation	4.1	4	3-5
Marketing of unhealthy foods to children and adolescents	4.3	4	3-6
Public procurement	4.6	5	4-5
Diet of children and adolescents	3.6	4	3-4
Child and adolescent obesity rates	3.3	3	3-4
Reducing inequality	3.3	4	3-4
Fulfilment of children's rights	3.7	4	3-5

Scale: 1 (impact unlikely) – 6 (impact very likely)

6.3.2 External evaluators comments

According to the external evaluators, the first PDMF meeting was successful and significant. Presentations were good, the discussion was interesting and the general atmosphere was pleasant.

The PDMF meeting included high level EU representatives from different DGs, including DG REFORM. The EU Commission was very well represented, but member states could have been better represented. However, they can be expected to be more involved in the mid-term conference.

The external evaluators concluded, that the representatives seemed optimistic about the project. JANPA and other EU projects have made good work and paved the way for the JA Best-ReMaP. Most of the representatives were very supportive. The external evaluators acknowledged the discussions on how the WPs' goals fit with EU policies and how some projects and initiatives such as Farm to Fork could collaborate or use the information collected by the Best-ReMaP. Representatives brought up also new aspects. They suggested that DG for Finance should be involved into the PDMF to facilitate member states to implement the project. To be successful, this project should be cost effective at national level and implement what is already done in previous projects instead of repeating the same. For instance, it was mentioned that recently Portugal has made good progress in reducing childhood obesity rates by making significant changes in physical activity and nutrition policies. Decreased childhood obesity rates were indicating that changes are possible, which is specifically important during COVID-19 pandemic, when the curve is turning in the other direction again.

Another point made by the external evaluators was the recognition of having the OECD involved. If this project provides data, it will be easier to get financing from decision makers. The PDMF meeting gives an added value for the Best-ReMaP and is a good step forward.

In addition, it was discussed that "The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance to address urgently the no communicable diseases epidemic". It may worsen the situation in member states, especially in vulnerable populations. It is important that policy makers have woken up to the situation; it will enhance the support and the impact of projects like the Best-ReMaP.

6.3.3 Limitations

As the poll was presented at the last minutes of the meeting (already overtime), several members of the PDMF had already left the meeting, likely contributing to the low response rate. In the future meetings, firmer timekeeping and a possibility to answer to the questions also after the meeting could facilitate the evaluation.

6.4 Conclusions

The PDMF participants were confident that the JA Best-ReMaP will have an impact on national and EU policies. Impact on childhood obesity rates was seen less likely, mainly due to the short duration of the project.

According to the external evaluators, the first PDMF meeting was successful and significant, including high level EU representatives from different DGs. Representatives were pleased to have the OECD involved in the Best-ReMaP. In general, PDMF representatives were very optimistic about the project reaching its foreseen outcomes.