



Best-ReMaP

Healthy Food for a Healthy Future

D1.3 Meeting minutes of the 3rd Policy Decision Making Forum meeting

Grant Agreement Number 951202

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Version 1.0
21. 06. 2023



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

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|--|
| DG | Directorate General (European Commission) |
| EC | European Commission |
| EU | European Union |
| 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 |
| PDMF | Policy Decision Making Forum |
| PFP | Public food procurement |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WP | Work Package |
| FSSS | Food System sustainability scoreboard |

Participants of the meeting

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Aszalós Albert Zoltán | Gregório Maria João | Ožbolt Petra |
| Bergmann Madsen Betina | Jenko Saša (online) | Robnik Levart Monika |
| Bodenbach Stephanie | Kamenšek Polona (online) | Sienkiewicz Dorota |
| Contreras Navarro Ana | Kivelä Jemnia | Sievers Hannah |
| Costongs Caroline | Kovács Reka | Silano Marco |
| Debeuckelaere Wim | Kylänen Marika | Šivec Nastja (online) |
| Dias Joana | Lindström Jaana | Tonello Samuele |
| Egnell Manon (online) | Lüth Daniela | Valve Päivi |
| Farpour-Lambert Nathalie | Lynes Matthew | Vin Karine (online) |
| Fras Neža (online) | Makai Ágnes | Wikström Katja |
| Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš Mojca | Martos Éva Katalin | |

Meeting Scope

The main aim of the Policy Decision Making Forum (PDMF) meetings is to inform PDMF Members about the progress of the Joint Action Best-ReMaP and to propose institutional and legislative solutions to the issues identified during the research phase of the Joint Action. Depending on the nature of the proposals, meeting documents and agenda topics, the PDMF Members are asked **to provide critical feedback on the feasibility of policy implementation at national and EU level**, with a view to the achievement of the Best-ReMaP outcome and impact indicators as set out in the Grant Agreement.

Expected outcomes

PDMF meetings aim to improve stakeholders' understanding of the JA Best-ReMaP activities, and **to align proposed institutional/legislative solutions with the actions foreseen by relevant DGs of the European Commission. This can** maximise the usefulness and implementation of the JA Best-ReMaP's action prepared by joint effort of MSs.

Meeting Agenda

| Time | Topic of discussion | Speakers |
|--|--|--|
| 13:00 – 13:05 | Introduction and welcome from the Best-ReMaP Coordinator | Mojca Gabrijelčič , Best-ReMaP Scientific Coordinator |
| 13:05 – 13:20 | Introduction of PDMF Members | PDMF Members |
| Presentation of JA Best-ReMaP's state of play emphasising on JA's outcome and impact indicators | | |
| 13:20 – 13:35 | Short report with Framework and roll on in new JA prevent NCD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on reformulation monitoring: monitoring implementation, reformulation comparisons and reformulation impacts on nutrient intakes A harmonised EU Framework for Action on reducing unhealthy food marketing to children EU harmonised Framework for Action on Public Food Procurement | Karine Vin , WP5 Leader Maria João Gregório , WP6 Leader Mojca Gabrijelčič , WP7 Leader and Wim Debeuckelaere , DG SANTE |
| 13:35 – 13:50 | Q&A, Joint discussion | PDMF Members and Best-ReMaP WP Leaders |
| 13:50 – 14:05 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-standing, sustainable Joint Research Centre (JRC) food database A Food System Sustainability Scoreboard – How to insert a monitoring mechanisms of the food system sustainability in the EU semester Annual reporting on the follow up Best-ReMaP implementation activities to the HLG on Nutrition & PA | Marco Silano , WP4 Leader and Joana Dias , JRC Samuele Tonello , EuroHealthNet Mojca Gabrijelčič , Best-ReMaP Scientific Coordinator |
| 14:05 – 14:20 | Q&A, Joint discussion | PDMF Members and Best-ReMaP WP Leaders |
| 14:20 – 14:30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration and sustainability plan (Report on sustainability and integration in national policies) with inputs from Regional Dialogues, discussion points for dialogue in Brussels on 25. 5. 2023 | Marco Silano , WP4 Leader and Mojca Gabrijelčič , Best-ReMaP Scientific Coordinator |
| 14:30 – 14:55 | Joint discussion on alignment of Best-ReMaP's outcome and impact indicators and potential actions in the EU policy environment | PDMF Members and Best-ReMaP WP Leaders |
| 14:55 – 15:00 | Evaluation of the meeting | |
| 15:00 – 16:00 | End of the Meeting | |

1 Introduction and welcome from the Best-ReMaP Coordinator

The 3rd JA Best-ReMaP Policy Decision Making Forum (PDMF) meeting was held on the 24th of May 2023 from 13:00 to 15:00 CEST at the Permanent Representation to the European Union Brussels in Belgium. 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 a specific body within a Joint Action (JA) that is expected to be the most powerful tool / mechanism to help understanding if the solutions and proposals that the Member States (MS) are jointly producing within JA Best-ReMaP are useful for the implementation of the policy processes at the different DGs. A scheme of interdisciplinary research platform of sectoral institution and links with the sector was also presented based on Slovenian case. Despite having a strong academic core, this Joint Action is first of all focused on policy implementation, and it thus poses policy dialogues at the centre of the JA sustainability, rather than just the publication of scientific articles.

JA Best-ReMaP is a project strongly embedded in the MS interests. It represents the implementation of the actions recognised and framed by the MS in the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014 – 2020, in particular:

- Greek Presidency EU Council conclusions on nutrition and health;
- Follow up to the JA JANPA, representing the sustainable implementation of the joint efforts;
- Based on the selected best practices, the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases (SGPP) started the collection of best practices (65) in 2018. Twelve best practices were selected by the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical activity (HLG (N&PA)) and presented at marketplace at Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Ispra. Three best practices were selected by members of the HLG.

The three best practices selected were joined in **the core Work Packages (WPs)** of JA Best-ReMaP:

- **WP 5** – EU Coordinated 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

Beside core WPs, there are **four horizontal WPs** of Joint Action Best-ReMaP:

- **WP 1** – Coordination
- **WP 2** – Dissemination
- **WP 3** – Evaluation
- **WP 4** – Sustainability and Integration in National Policies

M. Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš concluded the 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, meeting continued with the presentation of PDMF Representatives.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM), Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC). Unfortunately, representatives from DG AGRI were not able to attend and sent their apologies. There were no representatives from DG GROW and DG ENV present at the meeting.

DG REFORM

Ms Saša Jenko, Head of Health Sector at DG REFORM

DG SANTE

Mr Wim Debeuckelaere, Policy Officer at Unit D1: Farm to Fork Strategy, Directorate D: Food sustainability, international relations

Ms Hannah Sievers, Policy Officer at Unit A1: Antimicrobial Resistance, Human nutrition, Directorate A: One Health

Ms Stephanie Bodenbach, Head of Sector, General Food Law & Nutrition, European Commission DG SANTE

DG RTD

Ms Daniela Lüth, Policy Officer, Unit DG RTD Bioeconomy and Food Systems, Foreseen Horizon Europe Sustainable Food Systems Partnership

JRC

Ms Joana Dias, Project Officer - Scientific Research in Nutrition and Public Health at Unit F1: Health in Society, Directorate F: Health, Consumers and Reference Materials

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

3 Presentation of Joint Action Best-ReMaP

After the introductions of PDMF Representatives, the presentation of JA Best-ReMaP emphasising on JA's outcome and impact indicators followed.

Main JA Best-ReMaP outcome and impact indicators within core WPs are:

- **WP 5** – Report on reformulation monitoring: monitoring implementation, reformulation comparisons and reformulation impacts on nutrient intakes,
- **WP 6** – A harmonised EU Framework for Action on reducing unhealthy food marketing to children and
- **WP 7** – EU harmonised Framework for Action on Public Food Procurement,

The sustainability of the project is at the core of **WP 4** and main indicators to grant that sustainability is achieved are:

- Long-standing, sustainable Joint Research Centre (JRC) food database,
- The Food System Sustainability indicator,
- Annual reporting meetings with HLG on Nutrition & Physical Activity and Integration and sustainability plan (Report on sustainability and integration in national policies) as final deliverable of the JA.

3.1 WP 5: EU Coordinated Reformulation and processed food monitoring

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

Key methodology used by WP 5 was the French Oqali, which is a gold standard and used regularly in France as a monitoring tool for food quality. Main tasks of WP 5 were presented, including food group prioritization, dissemination of the methodology, implementation of a 1st snapshot, implementation of a 2nd snapshot, and trend assessment.

The work of WP 5 focused on five food groups: bread products, delicatessen meats and similar, fresh dairy products and desserts, breakfast cereals, soft drinks. The recodification of preexisting data was successfully accomplished in six countries, covering approximately 20.000 products. The first data collection and codification involved around 7.700 products, with statistical treatment already finished. However, the report is still pending for two countries, causing a slight delay in the task, but without impacting the overall timeline. In the first batch of the second data collection, data collection and codification have been completed for approximately 25.000 products, and statistical analyses are currently ongoing. A report is yet to be produced. The second batch of the second data collection is nearly finished in terms of data collection, with ongoing data codification. No statistical treatment or report has been initiated for this batch. The team is waiting for the final data from the first batch to proceed with

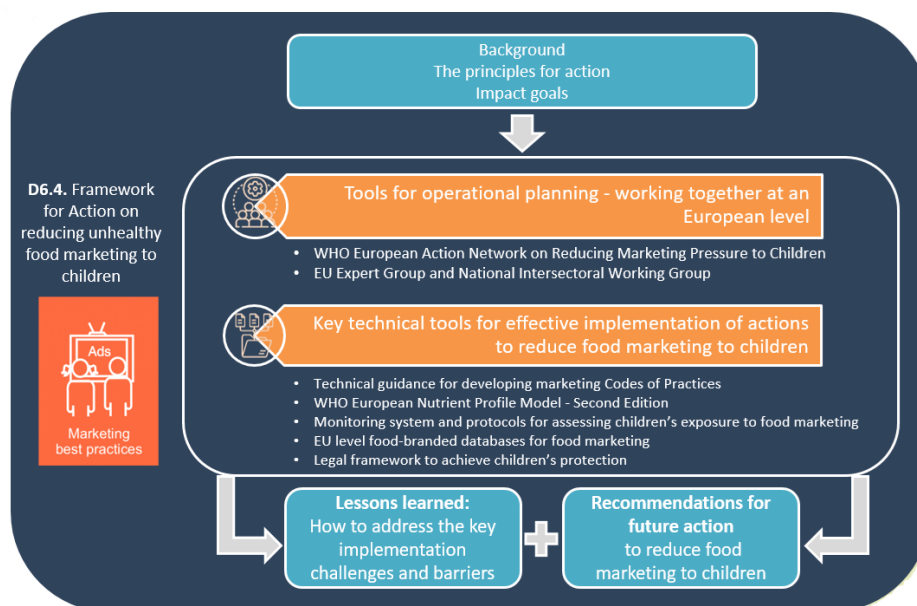
trend assessment and evaluate the impact on nutrient intake. Script preparation for data treatment and the production of indicators is underway.

Afterwards, K. Vin presented the main outcomes of WP 5. Regarding the dissemination of the monitoring methodology, common Best-ReMaP subcategories and list of five priority food categories were established. Comprehensive guidelines for monitoring were written and tested by partner countries, ensuring a standardized approach. Furthermore, common tools such as templates for data collection and programs for data entry verification and treatment were shared and tested. Trainings for MSs were conducted for data collection, codification, and treatment, involving 19 countries. The recodification of pre-existing data in Best-ReMaP subcategories has been carried out. Data collection for the five prioritized food categories has been conducted across 19 countries. The first statistical analysis at the branded level has been completed. Additionally, the creation of an open access database, which includes data collected during Best-ReMaP as well as pre-existing data, is underway and is being managed by JRC.

In conclusion, the progress of the work is proceeding as expected, with a significant amount of data available from various countries. Hopefully, these countries will continue the work even after the completion of the JA Bet-ReMaP, possibly in a new JA Prevent NCDs.

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

Maria João Gregório presented Work Package 6, which is jointly led by the Directorate-General of Health, Portugal, and the Irish Department of Health. The main outputs of WP 6 were then presented, including the Technical Guidance for developing food marketing Codes of Practice, the WHO European Nutrient Profile Model-Second Edition, and the Monitoring system and protocols for assessing children's exposure to food marketing. It was highlighted that all the work carried out within WP 6 would be integrated into the final deliverable, which is an EU Framework for Action consisting of implementable best practices to reduce unhealthy food marketing to children. A proposal of the framework was presented, encompassing a background section that outlined the principles for action and impact outcomes. The second part of the framework incorporated the core operational planning tools that have already been established, as these can greatly facilitate the work at the EU level. The third aspect of the framework identified the main technical tools necessary for the effective implementation of actions aimed at reducing food marketing to children. Finally, the framework included lessons learned and recommendations for future action.



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

WP 7 was presented by **Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš**, WP 7 Leader and representative of the National Institute of Public Health, Slovenia. The main aim of WP 7 is to contribute to the higher quality of menus, 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.

During the presentation, four main objectives of WP 7 were outlined:

- Support the establishment of the intersectoral working group for the public procurement of foods in public institutions, in the participating MS;
- Increase the understanding, knowledge and skills regarding public procurement of food/food products in selected public institutions;
- Enable better choice of quality food stuffs for balanced menus in selected public institutions, from at least one type of public institution, by piloting the Catalogue of foods in the public procurement procedure;
- Recommend further institutionalized implementation of the public procurement procedures for foods, based on quality standards, in EU MSs.

After describing the main goals of WP 7, M. Gabrijelčič presented the draft framework. She emphasized the importance of understanding the landscape and legislation surrounding public procurement, as well as the need for networking on local and international levels. The development of implementation approaches and tools, followed by evaluation, was also highlighted. M. Gabrijelčič concluded by summarizing the key steps of the WP 7 Framework scheme.



Lastly, M. Gabrijelčič shared presentation of outcomes prepared by WP 4, which emphasized the significance of enhancing transparency and implementing public food procurement policies in partner countries.

The key messages related to WP 7 underscored the importance of inter-sectoral public procurement hubs for knowledge sharing and capacity building. It was emphasized that unified legislation on public food procurement should be aligned and improved across EU countries to promote further knowledge development among stakeholders. Furthermore, governments need to allocate sufficient budgets for public food procurement and engage in co-design/participatory processes with parents and other relevant stakeholders.

Mr Wim Debeuckelaere, DG SANTE provided updates on the Framework for a sustainable food system, highlighting the significance of public food procurement as a crucial incentive for transitioning towards a more sustainable system. An impact assessment done by DG SANTE revealed that EU public settings' expenditure on food services amounts to approximately 55 billion EUR, presenting a substantial opportunity to effectively promote sustainability within our food systems. To achieve this, it is essential to have knowledge and awareness of the existing practices.

While current green public procurement criteria primarily focus on environmental aspects, there is a need to expand them to encompass social, health, and economic dimensions. Establishing national action plans and encouraging knowledge sharing among member states are important steps to facilitate this transition. Focal points can play a valuable role by providing information based on EU Commission guidelines, and fostering connections between legal experts and professionals in this domain.

Alongside knowledge building, a critical question arises: Will public buyers comply with the minimum mandatory criteria? The answer depends on the motivation and policies of member states. Therefore, it is crucial to determine how these criteria will be set, taking into account the potential impact on food supply. For instance, variations in the competition for organic food among member states could lead to price increases. Hence, a feasible and flexible approach must be developed that can be implemented across the EU without unintended consequences. Introduction of criteria should not allow cherry-picking, meaning when implementing criteria, it is important to avoid a situation where only favourable or advantageous aspects are chosen while ignoring other important factors and careful consideration must be given to ensure the efficient use of public funds while accommodating small enterprises and local producers. Collaboration will play a key role in navigating these next steps.

M. Gabrijelčič acknowledged the significant value of fostering collaboration with decision-makers in the context of the new JA prevent NCDs. This collaborative approach holds immense potential for effectively addressing the challenges that lie ahead and facilitating positive transformation within our food systems. By working together, we can ensure that decision-makers are equipped with comprehensive knowledge and empowered to undertake the actions needed to drive meaningful change.

3.4 WP 4: Sustainability and Integration in National Policies

3.4.1 Long-standing, sustainable Joint Research Centre (JRC) food database

Ms Joana Dias, JRC continued with more detailed description of the database. The JRC database called **FABLE** (EU Food and Beverage Labels Explorer) was started within EUREMO project, which collected data in 16 MSs on different branded food product categories. Discussion with DG SANTE and HaDEA on the sustainability of the database led to the idea of creating a tool that would be open access, available to policy makers, researchers and public and in a very easy format to understand, analyse and visualise the data. With Best-ReMaP, FABLE will get the second big dataset that will be incorporated.

Ms Dias presented the website that is being developed and will hopefully launch by September. The website will contain publications, scientific background, guidelines and glossary.

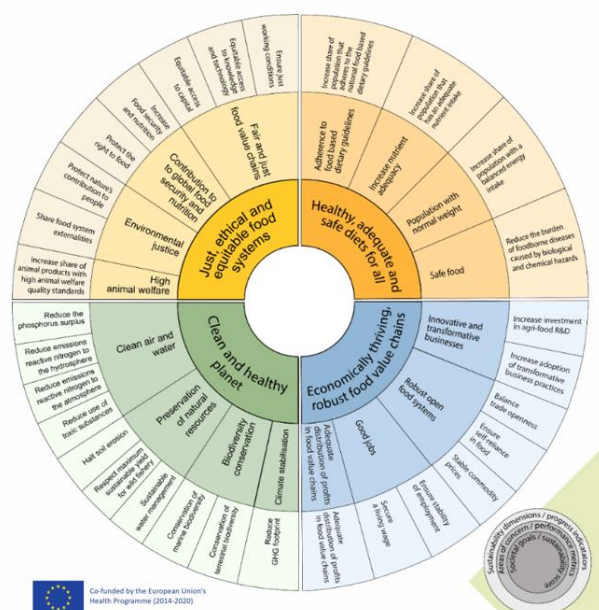
The data visualisation part will include the pre-set questions, and manual visualisation will be possible by choosing food group, component, country and type of analysis.

Access to the raw data hosted in FABLE will be possible after filling in a form. This procedure will serve as a metric for the actual use of the hosted data and for keeping track of potential research coming out of them (to be hosted at the FABLE Publications page); access to the raw data will be automatically granted after this registration procedure and there will be no screening of the applications.

3.4.2 A food system sustainability scoreboard - how to insert a monitoring mechanisms of the food system sustainability in the EU semester

Samuele Tonello, EuroHealthNet presented the content of and the underlying rationale behind an advocacy paper prepared within the work of Best-ReMaP's WP 4. The paper brings the case for developing and integrating a food system indicator into the annual cycle(s) of European Semester and its monitoring frameworks. S. Tonello explained why it would be necessary to do so, what is meant by "food system indicator, and finally what are the related policy challenges.

The answer to the why we would need a set of indicators to measure the sustainability if the whole food system is that the latter affect European society in several ways:



- Health: malnutrition and obesity leading cause of several NCDs and linked to mental health problems,
- Environmental footprint: depletion of natural resources and food waste,
- Socio-economic externalities: inequalities in supply chains.

For what concerns the ‘what’ this comprehensive set of indicators could look like, scientific literature offers several examples of how a potential Food System Indicator could be structured, such as **the Food Sustainability Compass**. The Food Sustainability Compass is a very comprehensive indicator and covers four main areas of concern: Healthy diets; Environmental impact; Economic dimension; Ethics. For each of these areas specific indicators are used to compare policies against science-based targets, thus showing progress in transitioning to more sustainable food systems.

At the EU level the need for a comprehensive health and sustainability-promoting food system is clearly stipulated in the EU Green Deal (Common Agricultural Policy Reform and Farm to Fork Strategy) and in several other food system-related policy instruments. However, no major document includes a specific comprehensive set of indicators to measure how we are faring with regards to the food sustainability goals proclaimed. S. Tonello mentioned that we had already a good reference point for how to implement this index of the food system, namely the Social Scoreboard established in the context of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

For this reason, a Food System sustainability scoreboard (FSSS), which would take as reference of achievements by the EPSR scoreboard in the field of employment and social policies, would strengthen the EU commitment to create a healthier and more sustainable European food system.

S. Tonello concluded with addressing two main challenges regarding the integration of the FSSS in the EU semester. The first challenge, referred to as the "what" challenge, involves determining the scientific and academic work needed to define what the FSSS should look like. As concerns the "how" challenge, work needs to be done to understand how to best form a policy and advocacy perspective. How could FSS be embedded into the European Semester and by what means could it be achieved.

3.4.3 Annual reporting on the follow up Best-ReMaP implementation activities to the HLG on Nutrition & PA

M. Gabrijelčič conveyed that the HLG on Nutrition and PA had been abolished, much to the dissatisfaction of MSs and experts in the field. With the absence of this network, there is a lack of platform for addressing crucial questions and challenges in nutrition and physical activity. WHO has called for nominations from MSs to form an implementation network, comprising colleagues from ministries across various countries. M. Gabrijelčič welcomed advice from the EU Commission on how to approach this networking opportunity at the EU level, emphasizing the need for collaboration and international engagement in tackling these issues.

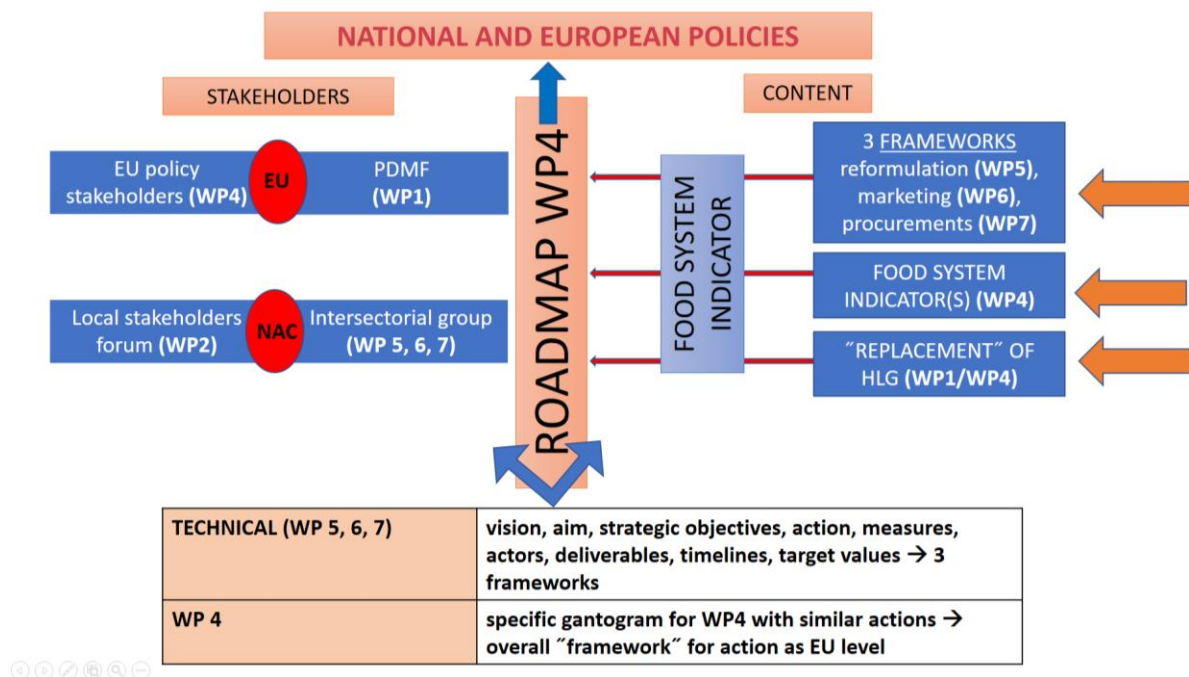
3.4.4 Integration and sustainability plan

Marco Silano from the Italian National Institute of Health (ISS), leader of Best-ReMaP Work Package 4, presented the final deliverable of the JA, which is the Report on sustainability and integration in national policies and needs to be completed by the end of September 2023. The analysis of the public health policies in nutrition/food across European Union MS, and the relevant outcomes from Core WPs will conclude discussions in the policy dialogues and the final report.

The table of content of the report includes the following sections:

1. Executive summary
2. Introduction
3. **Where the JA Best-ReMaP starts from:** analysis of the public health policies in nutrition across European Union and the Member States
4. **The relevant outcomes from Best-ReMaP on:**
 - a. Food reformulation
 - b. Food marketing
 - c. Public procurement
5. **The roadmap to transfer the scientific outcomes into EU policies**
6. **Implementation of policies at EU levels**

M. Silano presented the roadmap of WP 4, which builds upon the achievements of three core WP Frameworks focused on reformulation, marketing, and public food procurement. This roadmap will serve as a recommendation at both national and EU levels. To ensure its success, collaboration with stakeholders is crucial. To support the frameworks, an external subcontractor Mr Tim Lobstein conducted a comprehensive literature review on the health equity impact.



Additionally, three regional policy dialogues were introduced (Rome, Helsinki, and Vienna). These dialogues aim to highlight regional differences among Member States. The main inputs gathered from the regional dialogues include:

- Mandatory / Voluntary policies
- Relationship with the private sector
- Social Media / Digital tools
- Lack of resources
- Lack of groups for discussion/meeting

The day after the PDMF plenary, a policy dialogue with EU level experts was held, thus concluding the series of regional policy dialogues planned to promote the outcomes of the Joint Action Best-ReMaP

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

After the presentations of the JA achievements of the project and of the main outcome and impact indicators of JA Best-ReMaP, the PDMF Representatives were 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.

Stephanie Bodenbach from DG SANTE mentioned that she had returned to work on the General Food Law & Nutrition after spending a few years in other units. Her expertise lies in the field of reformulation and she expressed a strong desire to catch up and understand the current needs and future developments. S. Bodenbach is determined to monitor the project's progress and explore realistic actions.

Wim Debeuckelaere, DG SANTE, with knowledge in the procurement aspect, expressed that DG SANTE also aimed to foster favourable food environments, especially concerning marketing practices that expose children to unhealthy food. He expressed keen interest in an upcoming report and recommendations that would be of vital importance in addressing this matter. Given the unit's focus on frameworks and addressing identified needs, W. Debeuckelaere is committed to establishing an environment where healthy food becomes the obvious choice.

Daniela Lüth, DG RTD, expressed gratitude for having had the opportunity to learn, listen and understand the progress made that can be used in legislation, strategic planning and upcoming programs. She also suggested to identify any existing gaps, determining how to provide support for upcoming legislation. D. Lüth aims to establish a connection point between the achievements so far, while also exploring new synergies that can be leveraged.

Hannah Sievers, DG SANTE, congratulated for all the great work and progress. She will use her knowledge within the unit, engaging in discussions to explore additional support options.

Nathalie Farpour-Lambert expressed congratulations to the teams for their outstanding work, while also emphasising that an evaluation process would be conducted until September. One of the main challenges identified was the need for a deeper understanding of ongoing developments, as this would enhance the feasibility of implementing the recommended measures at a national level as shown in the PFP. Additionally, she acknowledged the need of reformulating food products to improve their quality. Addressing the issue of marketing to children was also deemed important.

Éva Katalin Martos, joined in the congratulations, emphasizing the significance of the HLG on nutrition and PA, which is currently absent. She believes that addressing this issue is crucial. It is essential to work towards finding a solution to ensure the HLG's presence and contribution. The re-establishment of HLG at EU level in line with the MSs representation would contribute significantly to the implementation of the JA Best-ReMaP on national and EU policy levels.

Caroline Costongs, Director of the EuroHealthNet, believes that developing final recommendations for legislative implementation. She acknowledged the importance of the HLG, suggesting to seek assistance from the Panel on Public Health. C. Costongs expressed her anticipation for the future progress of the project.

Wim Debeuckelaere, DG SANTE, highlighted the importance of reaching out to MSs that had already established rules and legislations. He further noted that there were some MSs that currently lack sufficient knowledge in this area. Engaging with all MSs would be mutually beneficial, as it would allow the exchange of valuable insights and experience.

Gabrijela Korže, Health Attaché at Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the EU, wrapped up the discussion by expressing her admiration for the fantastic job done at the technical level. She emphasized the importance of expanding the network and fostering connections between the scientific and attaché levels. Creating strong connections between these entities holds significant potential for advancing the work. She suggested that the findings be included in the council conclusions during the Spanish Presidency. The absence of the HLG was once again noted, as it would serve as a crucial link between the technical and attaché levels. Lastly, she highlighted that council conclusions should focus on adapting legislation or upgrading existing legislative measures.

5 End of the meeting

Mojca Gabrijelčič-Blenkuš concluded the meeting by thanking participants for their positive feedback, all their inputs and additional challenges that need to be addressed within JA that will continue in the new JA Prevent NCDs. The 3rd JA Best-ReMaP Policy Decision Making Forum (PDMF) meeting ended at 16:00 (CEST).

6 Evaluation

6.1 Background

Work Package 3 is responsible for the evaluation of the Best-ReMaP, 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. WP3 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.

6.2 Results

6.2.1 Results of the questionnaire

The online poll was completed by 8 respondents.

Impact on national and EU policies were considered likely. Of all the themes, the PDMF participants were quite confident that Best-ReMaP will have an impact on food environments (processed food reformulation, marketing to children, public procurement). The capacity of Best-ReMaP to improve diet of children and adolescents, child and adolescent obesity rates, advance societal equality and the fulfilment of children's rights were rated relatively modest by the respondents.

Compared to the results of the second PDMF meeting, the expectations towards having an impact on EU policies has increased, the expectations towards the impact on food environments have decreased. Expectations on having an impact on national policies, diet and the obesity rates of the children and adolescents and reducing inequality and fulfilment of children rights have remained more or less the same from the first PDMF meeting.

Table 1 Expectations towards Best-ReMaP impacts

| Impacts on... | Average | Median | Range |
|--|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| EU policies | 4,9 | 5,0 | 4-6 |
| National policies | 4,5 | 4,5 | 4-5 |
| Processed food reformulation | 4,5 | 4,5 | 3-6 |
| Marketing of unhealthy foods to children and adolescents | 4,3 | 4,5 | 2-6 |
| Public procurement | 4,9 | 4,5 | 4-6 |
| Diet of children and adolescents | 4,1 | 4,0 | 3-6 |
| Child and adolescent obesity rates | 3,6 | 4,0 | 2-5 |
| Reducing inequality | 3,5 | 4,0 | 1-4 |
| Fulfillment of children's rights | 3,6 | 3,5 | 3-5 |

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

Six respondents provided valuable feedback about the most important factors supporting the implementation of Best-ReMaP on the national and EU policy level. Their responses highlighted the significance of collaborative interactions between policy developers/implementers, scientists, EC, JRC, and WHO, as well as the importance of networking and gaining support from different DGs and organizations. Other key factors mentioned were good coordination, member-state commitments, collaboration among different EU/DGs and institutions, practical experiences, the EU PFP officer network for WP 7, and clear political commitment from Member States to implement Best-ReMaP recommendations.

Four respondents provided feedback on how to increase the impact of Best-ReMaP. Their suggestions included creating a multi-country assessment of food policies to promote competition in adopting and implementing good practices, ensuring networking at the commission level linked with the local level through the EU PFP officer network, and placing the implementation of Best-ReMaP recommendations high on the national and EU agenda.

6.3 Conclusions

In summary, successful implementation of Best-ReMaP requires collaboration, coordination, and commitment from various stakeholders, including policymakers, scientists, and organizations. Additionally, conducting multi-country assessments, establishing networking mechanisms, and prioritizing implementation can further enhance the impact of Best-ReMaP on EU and national policies, processed food reformulation, marketing practices, public procurement, children's diets, obesity rates, reducing inequality, and fulfilling children's rights. These findings provide valuable insights for maximizing the effectiveness and reach of Best-ReMaP in addressing important public health challenges.