



GUIDE TO DEVELOPING NUTRITION STANDARDS

For Healthy Public Food Procurement and Service Policies

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INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) published the [Action framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet](#) in response to growing recognition that governments have a responsibility to support healthy diets and to help curb the growing burden caused by diet-related non communicable diseases, such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. A key purpose of a healthy public food procurement and service policy is to establish healthy nutrition standards for food and beverages purchased, served and/or sold in government settings such as schools, public hospitals, childcare or child development facilities, correctional facilities and government workplaces. These nutrition standards aim to increase the availability of foods that promote healthy diets and limit foods that contribute to unhealthy diets. To achieve this, the policy should include nutrition standards that address each of the core principles of healthy diets (Fig 2). In order to ensure adherence to the standards, it is recommended that governments implement policies that are *mandatory* rather than using a *voluntary* approach.

Fig 1. What is a healthy public food procurement and service policy?

What is a healthy public food procurement and service policy?

A policy adopted by government that establishes healthy nutrition standards for the service and sale of food in public settings and food purchased or subsidized by the government to promote healthy diets.

FOOD

Any foods, beverages, ingredients, meals or snacks covered by the policy

PROCUREMENT AND SERVICE

Entire process of purchase, subsidy, provision, distribution, preparation, service and sale

POLICY

Policies, strategies, directives, legislation, rules, standards or guidelines – mandatory as well as voluntary, and with or without enforcement mechanisms



Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide governments in developing best practice nutrition standards for their healthy public food procurement and service policies.

Fig . 2 Core Principles of Healthy Diets



How to use this document

This document offers a set of best practice standards to be adopted or adapted for healthy public food procurement and service policies. These include comprehensive standards that can be applied across food categories, meals, snacks, and to the food preparation process to indicate what ingredients, foods, or food preparation methods should or should not be used in the procurement, preparation service, or sale of food and beverages in public settings.

The standards in this document will need to be adapted to each context and take into consideration the local food environment and dietary practices, existing policies and standards, target populations, nutritional priorities and resources available.



The standards should address all the five core principles of healthy diets, enable equitable access to healthier choices, and should be applied to all aspects of public food procurement and service, including:

- Food and beverages purchased with government funds
- Meals and snacks served through government agency settings such as schools, childcare settings, public hospitals and government workplaces
- Food and beverages sold in cafeterias, canteens, kiosks, tuck shops, school stores, and other retail outlets in government settings and/or on government property
- Food and beverages served and/or sold at meetings, conferences, and other events held in public workplaces and property

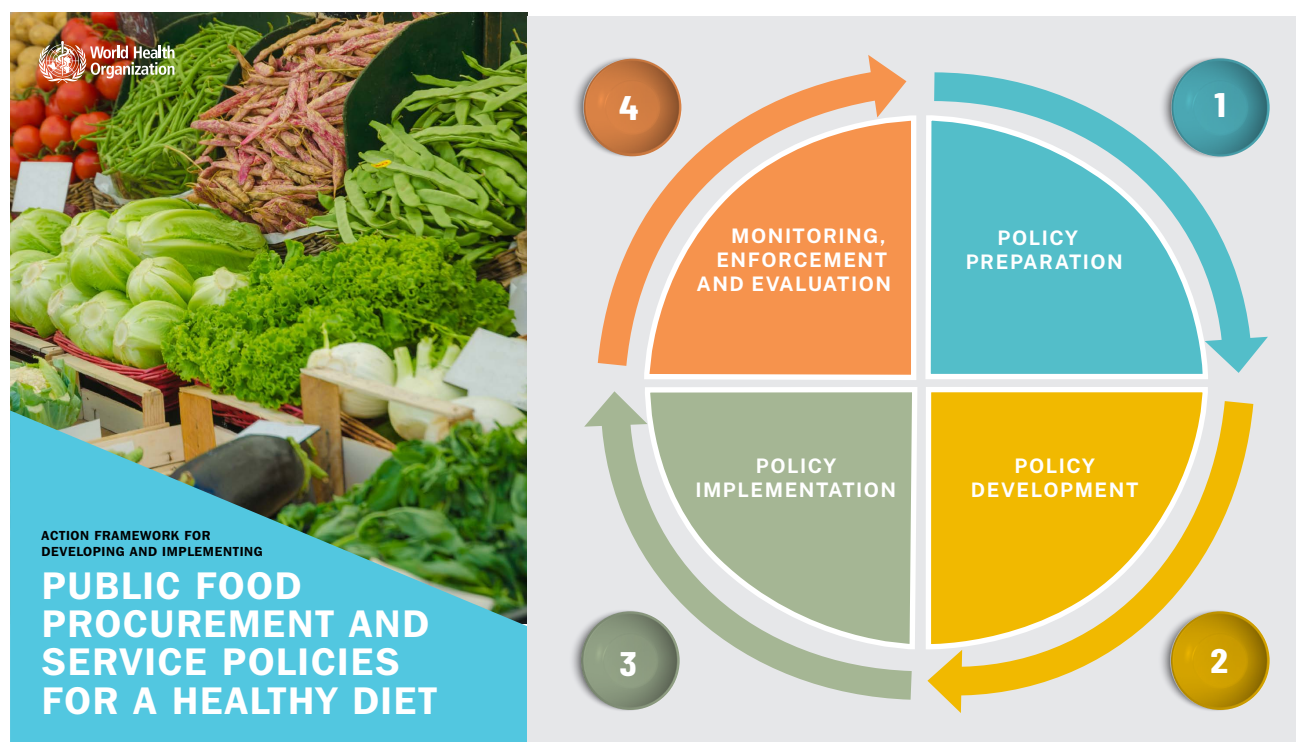
Follow these best practices to develop nutrition standards that are impactful and tailored to the context, food environment, culture and population within government settings:

- **Conduct a comprehensive food assessment of all applicable government settings to understand the types and sources of food commonly purchased, served and sold.** This will inform the development of nutrition standards relevant to the local context of the government settings.
- **Along with the core principles of a healthy diet, utilize existing local guidance to develop standards consistent with local dietary guidelines, healthy plate models, or other local food and nutrition policies.** Countries may already have existing policies or standards that apply to specific packaged or prepared foods that, at minimum, should be followed. A public food procurement and service policy can potentially strengthen existing policies by putting in place comprehensive standards available for all public settings that purchase and/or serve food. Countries may also refer to global guidance, such as the [WHO global sodium benchmarks](#), [WHO Healthy Diet Fact Sheet](#), or WHO Guidelines on [saturated fatty acid and trans-fatty acid intake](#), [sugars intake](#), [sodium intake](#), and [potassium intake](#).
- **Implement nutrition standards that are mandatory, specific and enforceable.** When developing nutrition standards, it is important to use specific language. Standards should also be quantifiable and verifiable. Vague standards are difficult to implement, monitor and enforce. For example, a standard such as “serve more vegetables” could be changed to “include at least one serving of vegetables in every meal served.”
- **Include comprehensive standards that complement each other to achieve desired outcomes.** For example, to reduce sodium intake, in addition to a standard that requires lower sodium snacks, another standard could specify the allowable portion size of snacks served. Standards should be applied across all food service venues (e.g., meal programs, canteens and kiosks) to ensure cohesive and consistent implementation.
- **Tailor standards to specific populations and contexts.** If the policy applies to different populations or different settings, the standards may need to be adjusted based on each population’s age profile, health and nutrition situation, cultural context and other considerations. Standards may vary based on whether one, some or all daily meals are being provided. For

example, if a target population lives full-time in a setting where they receive all daily meals (e.g., prisons, residential aged care facilities, boarding schools, military bases), food procurement and service policies will need to consider dietary guidance for the specific population groups in these settings. National food-based dietary guidelines are often published for different population groups and are helpful tools for identifying nutrition requirements relevant to specific contexts.

For more in-depth guidance, case studies and resources on the entire food procurement and service policy process – from development to adoption, implementation, monitoring, enforcement, and evaluation as highlighted in the policy cycle below – utilize the [WHO Action framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet](#) (see Fig 3).

Fig. 3. WHO Action framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet





NUTRITION STANDARDS

How to use this section

The nutrition standards in the section below address specific food categories, meals, snacks, and the food preparation process to indicate what ingredients, foods or methods should or should not be used in the procurement, preparation, service, or sale of food and beverages in public settings.

The standards are divided into 5 sections:

Standards by nutrient

Standards by food category

Standards for meals as served/sold

Standards for snacks

Standards for food preparation

The sections below provide both a list of **required standards** and additional **recommended standards**, that, when implemented alongside required standards, will enable comprehensive healthy food environments. Unless otherwise specified below, these standards apply to all foods prepared for meals and snacks served and for food sold in retail settings.

Procurement officers need to first assess if the current products served and sold meet the policy standards, and additionally may need to work with manufacturers or other distributors, vendors or retailers to determine if products are available for procurement that meet the policy standards. In some cases, reviewing nutrient content from labels may not provide sufficient information. Determine a strategy for assessing availability and reliable sourcing of permitted products prior to policy implementation.



Standards by nutrient

Trans fat and saturated fat

Required standard

- ✓ Do not purchase partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) or vegetable oils/fats that contain PHOs or food items that contain PHOs in the ingredient list. If ingredient information is not listed on the package, confirm with the manufacturer (or wholesaler/retailer/distributor) whether the product contains PHOs prior to purchasing.

Note

If trans fat content is listed on the nutrient declaration label, require vegetable oils/fats to contain < 2 g trans fat per 100 g, unless specified by existing trans fat regulation.

Recommended standard

- Use vegetable oils high in unsaturated fats (e.g., olive, soy, sunflower or corn oil) rather than animal fats or oils high in saturated fats (e.g., butter, ghee, lard, coconut or palm oil).

Salt and sodium

Required standards

- ✓ Require only iodized salt to be purchased.
- ✓ Salt and high sodium condiments/sauces should not be readily available on dining tables and in the dining area. These may only be served upon request.
- ✓ Set sodium content limits for packaged food categories that contribute the most to sodium consumption. Require the sodium content in these key categories to be below a specified maximum sodium amount per 100 g of food, ideally aligned with the WHO global or regional sodium benchmarks or national sodium targets for packaged foods, if available.

Recommended standard

- If available, purchase a low-sodium salt (where a percentage of the sodium is replaced with potassium or another mineral).

Note*

Setting Maximum Limits for Key Packaged Food Categories

Worldwide, most populations are not meeting the WHO recommended maximum limit of 2 g sodium intake per adult per day, leading to almost 2 million deaths per year. Nutrition standards can be used to help ensure that products and ingredients purchased are lower in sodium and that meals and snacks meet set sodium limits.

How to set sodium limits:

Where feasible, setting maximum sodium limits for key food categories is an important strategy to reduce sodium consumption from packaged foods. First, determine whether sodium targets are already established by your country's government. If targets are not established, refer to the World Health Organization's [Global Sodium Benchmarks](#), developed to guide countries in setting maximum sodium limits for food categories. Regional targets have been developed by the [Pan American Health Organization](#) and the [South-East Asia](#)

[Regional Office](#) targets. These global and regional benchmarks can be adapted to the local food environment, taking into consideration which key categories are commonly consumed, such as bread, canned vegetables and legumes, condiments and bouillon cubes.

For example, if bread, canned beans and bouillon cubes contribute the most to a population's sodium intake, the following sodium thresholds, in line with WHO benchmarks, could be set:

- Require leavened bread to be ≤ 370 mg sodium per 100 g
- Require canned legumes to be ≤ 50 mg sodium per 100 g
- Require concentrated bouillon cubes to be $\leq 13,000$ mg sodium per 100 g

This means that no bread, canned legumes or bouillon cubes can be purchased or used in food service or sales if the product exceeds these limits.

Some specific maximum limits based on the WHO Benchmarks are suggested in the section below, Standards by food category, including for leavened bread, soft to medium ripened cheese, canned vegetables and legumes, and condiments; however, each government will need to determine which key categories require setting sodium maximum limits based on their food profile.



Non-sugar sweeteners

Required standard



Food and beverages available must not contain non-sugar sweeteners, including in foods such as beverages, packaged fruit in juice, yogurt, packaged snacks, and desserts. Individual servings of non-sugar sweeteners may not be provided.

Note

Non-sugar sweeteners

Non-sugar sweeteners (NSS) refers to synthetic and naturally occurring or modified non-nutritive sweeteners that are not classified as sugars. Common NSS include acesulfame K, aspartame, advantame, cyclamates, neotame, saccharin, sucralose, stevia and stevia derivatives. These low-or no-calorie alternatives to free sugars are generally marketed as aiding weight loss or maintenance of healthy weight and are frequently recommended as a means of controlling blood glucose in individuals with diabetes. Given the uncertainty about the health effects of consuming foods that contain NSS, NSS are not recommended as replacements for sugar in packaged or prepared foods.



Standards by food category

Beverages

Required standards

- ✓ No sugar-sweetened beverages¹ or beverages sweetened with non-sugar sweeteners.
- ✓ Require fruit juice to be 100% juice with no added sugar or non-sugar sweeteners and individual portions served/sold must be < 175 ml / 6 oz.
- ✓ Require all milk to be unsweetened, unflavored, and not contain non-sugar sweeteners.
- ✓ Require all tea and coffee to be prepared and served/sold without added sugar.² (sugar may only be available separately upon request)
- ✓ Ensure that free, safe drinking water is available wherever meals and snacks are served.

Grains

Required standard

- ✓ Require at least 50% of all grains are whole grain (e.g., brown rice, whole grain bread, oats, whole wheat pasta, quinoa).

Bread and Baked Products

Required standard

- ✓ Require all leavened bread to fall below an established maximum threshold for sodium (refer to Note 2 for guidance on setting sodium limits by food category; for example, ≤ 370 mg sodium per 100 g, per the WHO benchmark).

Meat

Required standard

- ✓ No processed meats (e.g., sausage, bacon, cured meats, packaged meats, luncheon meats).

Recommended standards

- All ground beef and pork should be extra lean (e.g., total fat ≤ 5%).
- If canned fish or meat is used, require products to fall below an established maximum threshold for sodium (refer to [Note*](#) for guidance on setting sodium limits by food category; for example, for example, for canned fish, ≤ 280 mg sodium per 100 g, per the WHO benchmark).

1 **Definition:** Sugar-sweetened beverages are all types of beverages containing added sugars² which includes carbonated or non-carbonated soft drinks, fruit or vegetable juices and drinks, liquid and powder concentrates, flavored water, energy and sports drinks, ready-to-drink tea, ready-to-drink coffee and flavored milk or yogurt drinks.

2 **Definition:** Added sugars include all sugars added to foods and beverages by the manufacturer, cook or consumer from all sources, including honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates.



Dairy

Required standards

- ✓ **Yogurt/dairy drinks:** Require yogurt/dairy drinks to contain ≤ 10 g of sugar per 100 g with no non-sugar sweeteners added.
- ✓ **Cheese:** Require commonly served types of cheese to fall below an established maximum threshold (refer to [Note*](#) for guidance on setting sodium limits by food category; e.g., require soft to medium ripened cheese to contain ≤ 520 mg sodium per 100 g, per the WHO benchmark).

Fruits and Vegetables

Required standards

- ✓ Require all canned vegetables and legumes to fall below an established maximum threshold (refer to [Note*](#) for guidance on setting sodium limits by food category; for example, ≤ 50 mg sodium per 100 g, per the WHO benchmark).
- ✓ Require all canned fruits to have no added sugar and not contain non-sugar sweeteners.

Recommended standards

- If canned vegetables and legumes with no/low-sodium content are not available, require rinsing with water before using, as you work toward identifying products that meet the threshold.
- For settings offering daily meals or snacks, use a variety of fruits and vegetables, preferably fresh, local and in season.

Condiments and seasonings

Required standard

- ✓ Require all high sodium condiments and seasonings (e.g., soy sauce, fish sauce, ketchup, salad dressings, bouillon cubes, mixed seasonings) used in food preparation to fall below an established maximum threshold for sodium (refer to [Note*](#) for guidance on setting sodium limits by food category; e.g., $\leq 4,840$ mg sodium per 100 g of soy sauce or fish sauce // $\leq 13,000$ mg sodium per 100 g of concentrated bouillon and soup stock, per the WHO benchmarks).



Standards for meals as served/sold³

Required standards

- ✓ Require at least 1 fruit serving and 1 vegetable serving at every lunch and dinner meal. *Starchy vegetables such as corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava and other starchy roots should not be included in the vegetable count.*
- ✓ Require meals as served or sold to contain:
 - Saturated fat: ≤ 5 g
 - Calories from added sugar: $\leq 10\%$
 - Sodium: $\leq 35\%$ of the daily sodium limit⁴ (for the population served)
- ✓ Require at least 50% of grains served or offered to be whole grain (e.g., brown rice, whole grain bread, oats, whole wheat pasta, quinoa).
- ✓ Require a minimum number of vegetarian offerings per week that use a variety of plant-based proteins such as nuts, seeds and pulses.
- ✓ If dessert is available:
 - Limit to 2 times per week
 - Limit to ≤ 18 g sugar per serving and offer only small, bite-size portions

³ Ensure that all standards for beverages listed in [Standards by Food Category](#) are followed when meals are served and sold.

⁴ See the [WHO Guideline on sodium intake for adults and children](#) for recommended limits by population



Standards for snacks as served/sold⁵

Required standards

- ✓ Require all snacks served to contain at least 1 serving of fruits or vegetables. *Starchy vegetables such as corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava and other starchy roots should not be included in the vegetable count.*
- ✓ For snacks served or in retail settings, no deep-fried snacks such as samosas, empanadas, hand pies and donuts.
- ✓ For snacks served or in retail settings, no ultra-processed⁶ packaged snacks, such as packaged cookies/biscuits, candy, ice cream, edible ices, chips/crisps, and instant noodles.
- ✓ For snacks served or in retail settings, no prepared or homemade sweets, candies, or desserts, such as cookies, biscuits, cakes, puddings, donuts, buns and muffins.

Note

Strategies to ban and limit packaged snacks

It is strongly recommended to **not** allow ultra-processed packaged snacks such as cookies, chips/crisps and crackers to be procured, served or available for purchase in public settings; however, if some settings still allow packaged snacks, require settings to meet specific criteria **per individual snack served/sold**.

Example criteria (per package):

- Sugar: < 10 g
- Sodium: < 200 mg
- Saturated fat: < 2 g
- Trans fat: no trans fat
- Calories: < 200 calories
- Grain-based snacks (e.g., crackers, cookies) must have first ingredient listed as whole grain.
- No non-sugar sweeteners

In addition to setting specific criteria, it is also recommended to limit the availability and frequency of offering such snacks, if possible.

⁵ Ensure that all standards for beverages listed in [Standards by Food Category](#) are followed when meals are served and sold.

⁶ **Definition:** Ultra-processed foods are formulations of ingredients, mostly of exclusive industrial use, typically created by a series of industrial techniques and processes, many requiring sophisticated equipment. They are made mostly from cosmetic additives and/or substances extracted from foods, such as fats, starches, added sugars and hydrogenated fats that are not used in the home. They may also contain additives like artificial colors, flavors or stabilizers. Examples of these foods are frozen meals, soft drinks, hot dogs, instant noodles, packaged biscuits and cakes, and packaged snacks. For more information, the Global Food Research Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has prepared a brief found [here](#).



Standards for food preparation

Required standards

- ✓ No deep frying.
- ✓ Require visible fats is removed/trimmed off meats.
- ✓ Use standardized recipes, so that meal preparation is consistent.

Recommended standards

- Use healthier cooking methods such as steaming and boiling.
- Avoid reusing cooking oil.
- Use standardized tools to measure sodium and other spice mixtures that contain sodium so that sodium content in meals/dishes is consistent and does not exceed limits.
- Use herbs and/or natural spices for added flavor instead of processed seasoning mixes such as bouillon cubes or seasoning blends with added salt.
- Do not add salt to fresh/raw vegetables, salad, and in rice. Where possible, avoid or reduce salt used in preparing dough for flatbreads like chapati or poori, or tortillas where salt is not an essential ingredient for functional purposes.



COMPLEMENTARY STANDARDS

In addition to nutrition standards, public food procurement and service policies also provide an opportunity to include standards that make complementary changes to the food environment, such as limiting unhealthy food marketing and promoting environmental sustainability. Many jurisdictions already have standards for food safety established through an existing policy, regulation, or law. If not, it is recommended to add in food safety standards to the food procurement and service policy (Refer to the [WHO's Five keys to safer food manual](#) to guide the setting of standards for safe preparation and handling of food).

Food Marketing Restrictions

Protecting the public from the pervasive and persuasive marketing of unhealthy food and beverages is a crucial step in supporting a healthy food environment that enables healthy diet choices. It is particularly important to prevent children's exposure to unhealthy food marketing; industry commonly targets children, who are particularly impressionable and unable to recognize advertising intent. Evidence shows that food and beverage marketing has a significant impact on children's food and drink preferences, requests and consumption. WHO has developed a [Guideline on Policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing](#) as well as a [policy brief](#), which can be used to guide the adoption of marketing restrictions as part of or complementary to healthy public food procurement and service policies.



Required standard

- ✓ No food and beverage marketing on public property. This includes any form of commercial communication, message or action that acts to advertise or otherwise promote a product or service, or its related brand, and is designed to increase, or has the effect of increasing, the recognition, appeal and/or consumption of products or services. This may include images, logos, characters, and other representations of brands, foods, and beverages on posters, refrigerators, or through free giveaways, sponsorships or other branded products.
 - Exceptions should only be made for marketing fresh fruits, vegetables and water. Some policies have extended this marketing ban to areas surrounding public property; for example, no food and beverage marketing within 50 meters of a public school or health facility.



Recommended standards

Recommendations regarding the marketing, placement, promotion and pricing of food and beverages in public settings as part of a healthy public food procurement and service policy include the following:

- Use price incentives to encourage the healthier choice. Offer healthier foods and beverages at a lower price and/or as part of a promotional offer. Do not allow price discounts or other promotions on unhealthy food products.
- Only stock healthy options (e.g., fruits, vegetables, water) at the point of purchase.
- Make healthy options (e.g., fruits, vegetables, water) easier to choose. Place healthy options prominently (highly visible) and in accessible areas. Make less healthy options less prominent.
- Use menus and signage (e.g., posters, table cards/tents) to encourage the sale of healthier items. Menus can be marked for guidance with logos that represent low sodium, no added sugar, etc. using strict criteria. Use enticing language to convey healthier options.

Promoting Environmental Sustainability

Incorporating sustainability criteria into healthy public food procurement and service policies is a key method to achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and fits into the [United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Incorporating these criteria can benefit both food consumption habits as well as the food production system. In addition to the recommended standards below, refer to the [WHO's Sustainable healthy diets: guiding principles](#) for further guidance on incorporating criteria to limit negative environmental impact.

Recommended standards

- Purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables. Set a percentage of foods/products that must be procured locally (defined by a distance radius from the site or jurisdiction).
- Adapt menus to reflect seasonal availability of fruits and vegetables.
- Set a percentage of purchased meat and dairy that is free from antibiotics and/or hormones.
- Limit the purchase of foods from producers using high levels of pesticides.
- Develop more plant-based menus and limit the quantity of meat served.
- Ensure minimal food loss and waste. Incorporate a food waste reduction plan into operating procedures.
- Incorporate a plan for recycling and composting.
- Incorporate a plastic waste reduction plan, e.g., avoid purchasing bottled water, eliminate single-use plastics, set a standard to limit the use of plastic packaging.
- Limit packaging and disposable utensil impact on the environment by using reusable and/or compostable plates, utensils and beverage containers.
- Encourage customers to bring their own refillable water bottle by providing water in a way that makes it easy and appealing to refill water bottles.
- Choose energy efficient equipment when possible.



ANNEX

Annex A: Definitions

Added sugars: All sugars added to foods and beverages by the manufacturer, cook or consumer from all sources, including honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates.

Low-sodium salt: In low-sodium salt, a portion of the sodium chloride (typically ranging from 10 to 50%) is replaced with alternative minerals, most commonly potassium chloride (KCl), but may also include calcium chloride, magnesium chloride or others.

Non-sugar sweeteners (NSS): Synthetic and naturally occurring or modified non-nutritive sweeteners that are not classified as sugars. Common NSS include acesulfame K, aspartame, advantame, cyclamates, neotame, saccharin, sucralose, stevia and stevia derivatives. These low-or no-calorie alternatives to free sugars are generally marketed as aiding weight loss or maintenance of healthy weight and are frequently recommended as a means of controlling blood glucose in individuals with diabetes. Given the uncertainty about the health effects of consuming foods that contain NSS, NSS are not recommended as replacements for sugar in packaged or prepared foods.

Partially hydrogenated oils: Oils and fats that have been hydrogenated, but not to complete or near complete saturation, and that have an iodine value of greater than four (4).

Processed meat: Meat that has been transformed through salting, curing, fermentation, smoking, or other processes to enhance flavor or improve preservation. Most processed meats contain pork or beef, but processed meats may also contain other red meats, poultry, offal, or meat by-products such as blood. (WHO: <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/cancer-carcinogenicity-of-the-consumption-of-red-meat-and-processed-meat>)

Sugar-sweetened beverages: All types of beverages containing added sugars which includes carbonated or non-carbonated soft drinks, fruit or vegetable juices and drinks, liquid and powder concentrates, flavored water, energy and sports drinks, ready-to-drink tea, ready-to-drink coffee and flavored milk or yogurt drinks.

Trans-fatty acids (trans fat): All fatty acids with at least one carbon-carbon double bond in the trans configuration, regardless of whether they are produced industrially or are derived from ruminant sources. “Industrially produced trans-fatty acids” means all fatty acids with at least one carbon-carbon double bond in the trans configuration, and which are produced by industrial processes, including partial hydrogenation and heat treatment of oils and fats.

Ultra-processed foods: Ultra-processed foods are formulations of ingredients, mostly of exclusive industrial use, typically created by a series of industrial techniques and processes, many requiring sophisticated equipment. They are made mostly from cosmetic additives and/or substances extracted from foods, such as fats, starches, added sugars and hydrogenated fats that are not used in the home. They may also contain additives like artificial colors, flavors or stabilizers. Examples of these foods are frozen meals, soft drinks, hot dogs, instant noodles, packaged biscuits and cakes, and packaged snacks.

Whole grain: Containing all the essential parts and naturally occurring nutrients of the entire grain seed in their original proportions. If the grain has been processed (e.g., cracked, crushed, rolled, extruded, and/or cooked), the food product should deliver the same rich balance of nutrients that are found in the original grain seed.



Annex B: Summary of required nutrition standards

The following provides a quick reference guide of the list of required standards outlined in this document.

Standards by nutrient

Trans fat and saturated fat

- ✓ Do not purchase partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) or vegetable oils/fats that contain PHOs or food items that contain PHOs in the ingredient list. If ingredient information is not listed on the package, confirm with the manufacturer (or wholesaler/retailer/distributor) whether the product contains PHOs prior to purchasing.

Note

If trans fat content is listed on the nutrient declaration label, require vegetable oils/fats to contain < 2 g trans fat per 100 g, unless specified by existing trans fat regulation.

Salt and sodium

- ✓ Require only iodized salt to be purchased.
- ✓ Salt and high sodium condiments/sauces should not be readily available on dining tables and in the dining area. These may only be served upon request.
- ✓ Set sodium content limits for packaged food categories that contribute the most to sodium consumption. Require the sodium content in these key categories to be below a specified maximum sodium amount per 100 g of food, ideally aligned with the WHO global or regional sodium benchmarks or national sodium targets for packaged foods, if available.

Non-sugar sweeteners

- ✓ Food and beverages available must not contain non-sugar sweeteners, including in foods such as beverages, packaged fruit in juice, yogurt, packaged snacks, and desserts. Individual servings of non-sugar sweeteners may not be provided.

Standards by food category

Beverages

- ✓ No sugar-sweetened beverages or beverages sweetened with non-sugar sweeteners.
- ✓ Require fruit juice to be 100% juice with no added sugar or non-sugar sweeteners and individual portions served/sold must be < 175 ml / 6 oz.
- ✓ Require all milk to be unsweetened, unflavored, and not contain non-sugar sweeteners.
- ✓ Require all tea and coffee to be prepared and served/sold without added sugar (sugar may only be available separately upon request).
- ✓ Ensure that free, safe drinking water is available wherever meals and snacks are served.



Grains

- ✓ Require at least 50% of all grains are whole grain (e.g., brown rice, whole grain bread, oats, whole wheat pasta, quinoa).

Bread and Baked Products

- ✓ Require all leavened bread to fall below an established maximum threshold for sodium (refer to Note 2 for guidance on setting sodium limits by food category; for example, ≤ 370 mg sodium per 100 g, per the WHO benchmark).

Meat

- ✓ No processed meats (e.g., sausage, bacon, cured meats, packaged meats, luncheon meats).

Dairy

- ✓ **Yogurt/dairy drinks:** Require all yogurt/dairy drinks to contain ≤ 10 g of sugar per 100 g with no non-sugar sweeteners added.
- ✓ **Cheese:** Require commonly served types of cheese to fall below an established maximum threshold.

Fruits and Vegetables

- ✓ Require all canned vegetables and legumes to fall below an established maximum threshold (refer to [Note*](#) for guidance on setting sodium limits by food category; for example, ≤ 50 mg sodium per 100 g, per the WHO benchmark).
- ✓ Require all canned fruits to have no added sugar and not contain non-sugar sweeteners.

Condiments and seasonings

- ✓ Require all high sodium condiments and seasonings (e.g., soy sauce, fish sauce, ketchup, salad dressings, bouillon cubes, mixed seasonings) used in food preparation to fall below an established maximum threshold for sodium (refer to [Note*](#) for guidance on setting sodium limits by food category; e.g., $\leq 4,840$ mg sodium per 100 g of soy sauce or fish sauce // $\leq 13,000$ mg sodium per 100 g of concentrated bouillon and soup stock, per the WHO benchmarks).

Standards for meals as served/sold

- ✓ Require at least 1 fruit serving and 1 vegetable serving at every lunch and dinner meal. *Starchy vegetables such as corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava and other starchy roots should not be included in the vegetable count.*
- ✓ Require meals as served or sold to contain:
 - Saturated fat: ≤ 5 g
 - Calories from added sugar: $\leq 10\%$
 - Sodium: $\leq 35\%$ of the daily sodium limit (for the population served)



- ✓ Require at least 50% of grains served or offered to be whole grain (e.g., brown rice, whole grain bread, oats, whole wheat pasta, quinoa).
- ✓ Require a minimum number of vegetarian offerings per week that use a variety of plant-based proteins such as nuts, seeds and pulses.
- ✓ If dessert is available:
 - Limit to 2 times per week
 - Limit to ≤ 18 g sugar per serving and offer only small, bite-size portions

Standards for snacks as served/sold

- ✓ Require all snacks served to contain at least 1 serving of fruits or vegetables. *Starchy vegetables such as corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava and other starchy roots should not be included in the vegetable count.*
- ✓ For snacks served or in retail settings, no deep-fried snacks such as samosas, empanadas, hand pies and donuts.
- ✓ For snacks served or in retail settings, no ultra-processed packaged snacks, such as packaged cookies/biscuits, candy, ice cream, edible ices, chips/crisps, and instant noodles.
- ✓ For snacks served or in retail settings, no prepared or homemade sweets, candies, or desserts, such as cookies, biscuits, cakes, puddings, donuts, buns and muffins.

Standards for food preparation

- ✓ No deep frying.
- ✓ Require visible fats is removed/trimmed off meats.
- ✓ Use standardized recipes, so that meal preparation is consistent.

Standards for food marketing restrictions

- ✓ No food and beverage marketing on public property. This includes any form of commercial communication, message or action that acts to advertise or otherwise promote a product or service, or its related brand, and is designed to increase, or has the effect of increasing, the recognition, appeal and/or consumption of products or services. This may include images, logos, characters, and other representations of brands, foods, and beverages on posters, refrigerators, or through free giveaways, sponsorships or other branded products.
 - Exceptions should only be made for marketing fresh fruits, vegetables and water. Some policies have extended this marketing ban to areas surrounding public property; for example, no food and beverage marketing within 50 meters of a public school or health facility.



Annex C: Resources

Food procurement general resources

- [WHO Action Framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet](#): *A resource that provides guidance for governments on how to develop, implement, and strengthen a healthy public food procurement or service on a national or sub-national level.*
- [Resolve to Save Lives Healthy Public Food Procurement Resource Library](#): *Includes reference materials on healthy public food procurement and service, such as example policies, implementation guides, monitoring resources, published literature.*
- [Resolve to Save Lives Healthy public food procurement and service policies factsheet](#): *Summarizes core principles, benefits and resources for implementing healthy food procurement and service policies.*

General dietary guidance

- [WHO Healthy Diet Fact Sheet](#): *Describes basic principles for consuming a healthy diet throughout the life-course to help prevent malnutrition in all its forms as well as a range of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and conditions.*
- [WHO 5 Keys to a Healthy Diet](#): *Describes five key elements of a healthy diet.*

Guidance on specific nutrients and food categories

- [WHO Global Sodium Benchmarks](#)
- [WHO REPLACE Trans Fat Action Package](#)
- [Use of non-sugar sweeteners: a WHO guideline](#)
- [WHO guidelines on fats and carbohydrates](#)
- [WHO guidelines on sugars intake](#)
- [WHO guidelines on sodium intake](#)
- [WHO guidelines on potassium intake](#)
- [UNC Global Food Research Program: Ultra-processed foods factsheet](#)
- [FAO: Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes -An evidence and policy overview on the state of knowledge and gaps](#)

Marketing restrictions

- [WHO Policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing](#): WHO guideline: This WHO Guideline provides Member States with recommendations and implementation considerations on policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing, based on evidence specific to children and to the context of food marketing.
- [WHO Protecting children from the harmful impact of food marketing: policy brief](#): *Provides policy-makers and program managers, health professionals and advocates with information and policy options*

to increase protection of children from the harmful impact of food marketing by reducing the power of, and exposure of children to, such marketing practices.

- [University of North Carolina \(UNC\) Global Food Research Program: Food and beverage marketing factsheet](#): Fact sheet describing the prevalence and persuasive nature of junk food marketing and its impact on children and adolescents. Learn how unhealthy food marketing contributes to global childhood obesity and about recommendations for regulations to limit its harms.
- [NCD Alliance Selling a sick future](#): A guide on how to counter harmful commercial marketing towards children and young people across risk factors for noncommunicable diseases.

Sustainability

- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Public Food Procurement for Sustainable Diets [Volume 1](#) and [Volume 2](#): Provides evidence on how public food procurement can be used as a development tool and deliver multiple benefits for multiple beneficiaries, and provides evidence of the instruments, enablers, and barriers for implementation.
- [WHO Sustainable healthy diets: guiding principles](#): Offers holistic guiding principles to diets that considers international nutrition recommendations; the environmental cost of food production and consumption; and the adaptability to local social, cultural and economic contexts.
- [Local Governments for Sustainability \(ICLEI\) Manifesto for establishing minimum standards for public canteens across the EU](#): Summarizes seven actionable propositions for establishing minimum standards for public canteens in Europe, which may be a useful reference for other regions as well.