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NOURISHING & MOVING Methods Document

World Cancer Research Fund International
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Executive Summary

This Methods Document sets out the process taken by WCRF International to identify and present national-level, implemented policy actions in physical activity and healthy diets around the world. It is one of the first deliverables in CO-CREATE (Confronting Obesity: Co-creating Policy with Youth), a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, under grant agreement #774210. It was presented to the European Commission by 28 February 2019, following review by both the CO-CREATE team and external experts.

The Methods Document begins by summarising the frameworks that have been developed by WCRF International in healthy diets (the NOURISHING framework) and in physical activity (the MOVING framework). Based on these frameworks, policy databases present the policy actions in a structured and consistent way. The information in the databases is verified externally and presented on a web platform in an easily accessible and searchable format.¹

This Methods Document sets out the processes for two distinct scans of policy actions, which will enable WCRF International to populate the databases in a consistent way over time:

- first, a global scan of policy actions aimed at promoting physical activity and healthy diets, which uses a wide variety of sources to provide a full overview from around the world as policy actions come into force.
- secondly, a comprehensive European scan (required by the CO-CREATE project), which takes a structured, systematic approach to searching for policy actions in 27 countries. This builds on the findings of the global scan but with additional specific steps within each of these countries, including searching legislation databases (using detailed search terms) and ministry and government websites (using basic search terms). This comprehensive scan will be undertaken once.

The Methods Document states the criteria for inclusion/exclusion and verification requirements, and lists many of the most relevant sources, as well as providing a flowchart of the strategy that is used in undertaking the scans. Limitations and challenges of the process are set out.

A Technical Annex to this Methods Document is also available, which sets out the process in more detail, including the search terms and how the information is captured when carrying out the comprehensive European scan. It also details a set of interviews that were held as part of the research for this project – this Methods Document draws on the knowledge of others who have established and maintain databases of health legislation/policy/actions.

The document was updated in 2021 to reflect some small adjustments to the methodology. These are small modifications and not substantive changes.

Information **specifically relevant to the comprehensive European scan** is presented in purple shaded boxes throughout for ease of reference.

¹ Note that the NOURISHING database predates the CO-CREATE project and will be updated by these scans. The MOVING database/web platform, however will be entirely populated by the forthcoming scans as part of the CO-CREATE project.

Note:

This Methods Document is presented as a living document. It will be updated during the CO-CREATE project to draw on:

- a) new sources of data on policy actions that become available;
- b) learnings from the creation of the MOVING database and web platform;
- c) feedback from the benchmarking process (a separate deliverable within CO-CREATE – see [Technical Annex](#));
and
- d) learning throughout the policy scan itself.

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List of acronyms / abbreviations

CO-CREATE	Confronting Obesity: Co-creating Policy with Youth project
COSI	WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative
GAPPA	Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (WHO 2018)
HBSC	WHO collaborative cross-national survey: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children
HEPA	health-enhancing physical activity
HEPA Europe	European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity
HEPA-PAT	HEPA Europe Policy Audit Tool
HFSS	high in fat, salt and/or sugar
ISPAH	International Society for Physical Activity and Health
MOVING	the MOVING Framework/database on physical activity policy actions
NCD	non-communicable disease
NOURISHING	the NOURISHING Framework/database on diet and nutrition policy actions
PA	physical activity
SSB	sugar-sweetened beverage
WCRF	World Cancer Research Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WP	work package of the CO-CREATE project

Definitions

Term	Definition
government-supported policy action	Support must be publicly communicated and may consist of financial sponsorship or an endorsement (public statement of support) by government. Programmes or interventions run by non-governmental actors, such as civil society organisations or companies, are not included unless these actions are supported in some way by government.
health-enhancing diet	A diet rich in wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and legumes and low in energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods.
health-enhancing physical activity	Any form of physical activity that benefits health and functional capacity without undue harm or risk.
policy	The aims, objectives, targets, strategy, tactics, plans and action plans that guide the actions of a government.
policy action	Any form of <i>government action</i> including, but not restricted to, legislation, regulation, decrees, standards, policies, programmes, guidelines, fiscal measures and government-supported voluntary programmes, action and campaigns. All policy actions are part of public policy, but not all policies are policy actions.
policy implementation	Policy implementation is a complex change process and therefore can involve several stages or levels of implementation. For the purpose of updating the databases, we define implementation as the point when an adopted policy action first comes into effect. For example, draft or model laws, policy proposals, and laws that have been passed but not come into effect are not included in the databases.

The definitions were drawn up using a) existing definitions that have been reinforced through use in the NOURISHING database, b) expert advice, c) comparison with other databases' definitions and d) other official sources (e.g. WHO).

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 - Professor Catherine Woods, Chair, Physical Activity for Health, Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, University of Limerick
- those interviewed about policy databases (see Appendix A5);
 - the experts who attended the ISPAH special interest group meeting held at WCRF International’s office on 18 October 2018; and
 - the experts who attended the face-to-face meeting on benchmarking tools and indicators, held in London in February 2019.

The Methods Document in the context of CO-CREATE

CO-CREATE (Confronting Obesity: Co-creating Policy with Youth) is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, under grant agreement #774210.

The overarching aim of CO-CREATE is:

‘to reduce childhood obesity and its co-morbidities by working with adolescents, to create, inform and disseminate obesity-preventive evidence-based policies.... [It] applies a systems approach to provide a better understanding of how factors associated with obesity interact at various levels.’

The Methods Document is part of Work Package 2 (WP2) on Policy Assessment and Monitoring and is described in the CO-CREATE Grant Agreement as follows:

‘Task 2.2: Establish methods for a global and specific European level policy scan related to diets and physical activity

Methods will be established for a global policy scan related to diets and physical activity based on WCRF International methods for maintaining the NOURISHING policy database, including inclusion criteria [section 5.2.1], search strategy [section 5.1], data extraction [Technical Annex] and verification process [section 5.3]. These methods will include a section detailing a targeted and much more comprehensive process for sourcing policies being implemented in European countries [integrated throughout – highlighted].

As with NOURISHING, only implemented government policies will be included in the database and the verification process will involve direct communication with in-country contacts to verify each policy's implementation and the accuracy of the policy description (we will collaborate with the WHO Regional Office of Europe² to identify appropriate contacts in each European country for in-depth European policy scan).’

The Methods Document is Deliverable D2.3:

Methods document for policy scan: A document will be prepared to make publicly available methodology for a global and targeted European policy scan.

More information about CO-CREATE is available on the website of the lead partner, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health: <https://www.fhi.no/en/studies/co-create/> This includes information on youth involvement throughout the project, which is concentrated in work packages 4–7.³

² The form of this collaboration will primarily include assistance with verification of the summaries of policy actions.

³ The CO-CREATE project focuses on adolescents (aged 10–19), and the benchmarking tools and indexing processes that form part of later work packages will focus on policy interventions that directly or indirectly impact on this age group. The NOURISHING and MOVING frameworks will continue to exist after CO-CREATE, and the policy scans will therefore search for all nutrition and physical activity policy actions, regardless of age.

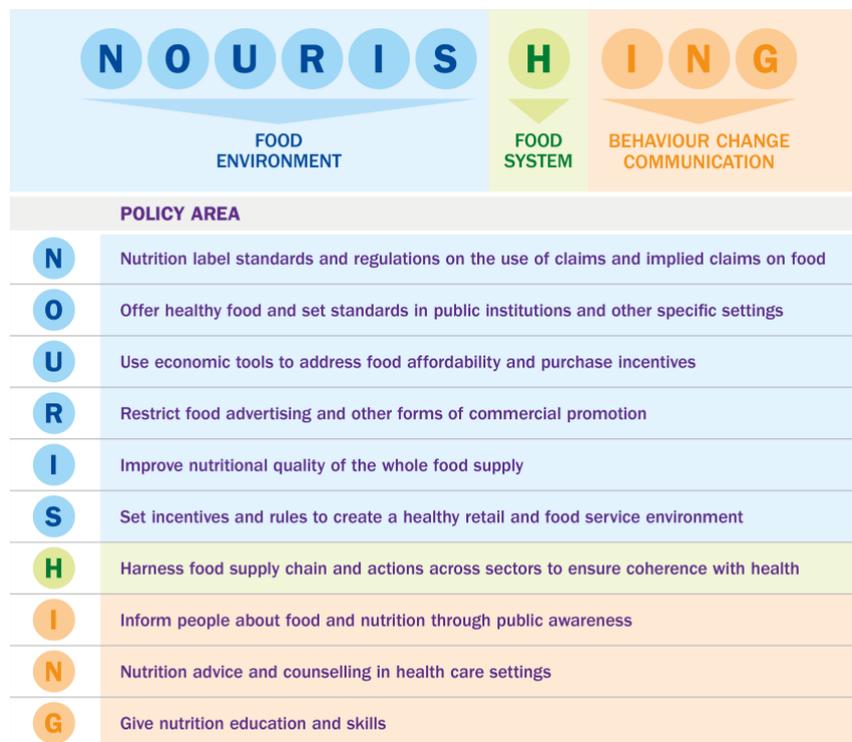
The NOURISHING / MOVING frameworks and policy databases

The NOURISHING framework and policy database

WCRF International’s NOURISHING framework identifies ten areas for governments to take action to promote healthy diets and reduce overweight, obesity and diet-related NCDs.⁴ Its accompanying policy database aims to provide an extensive overview of implemented government policy actions from around the world, as well as links to published evaluations of included policy actions. It has been designed to be used as a tool for policymakers, civil society organisations and researchers (section 2.4). The NOURISHING framework:

- formalises a comprehensive package of policies to promote healthier eating and prevent overweight, obesity and diet-related NCDs that is applicable globally;
- provides options that allow policymakers flexibility to shape a response suitable and relevant for their national, regional and local contexts and target populations; and
- establishes a framework for reporting, categorising and monitoring policy actions around the world, and through which the policy evidence can be systematically categorised, updated, interpreted and then communicated.

The policy actions contained within the NOURISHING framework are categorised into 10 key policy areas that fall within three domains – the food environment, food system and behaviour change communication:



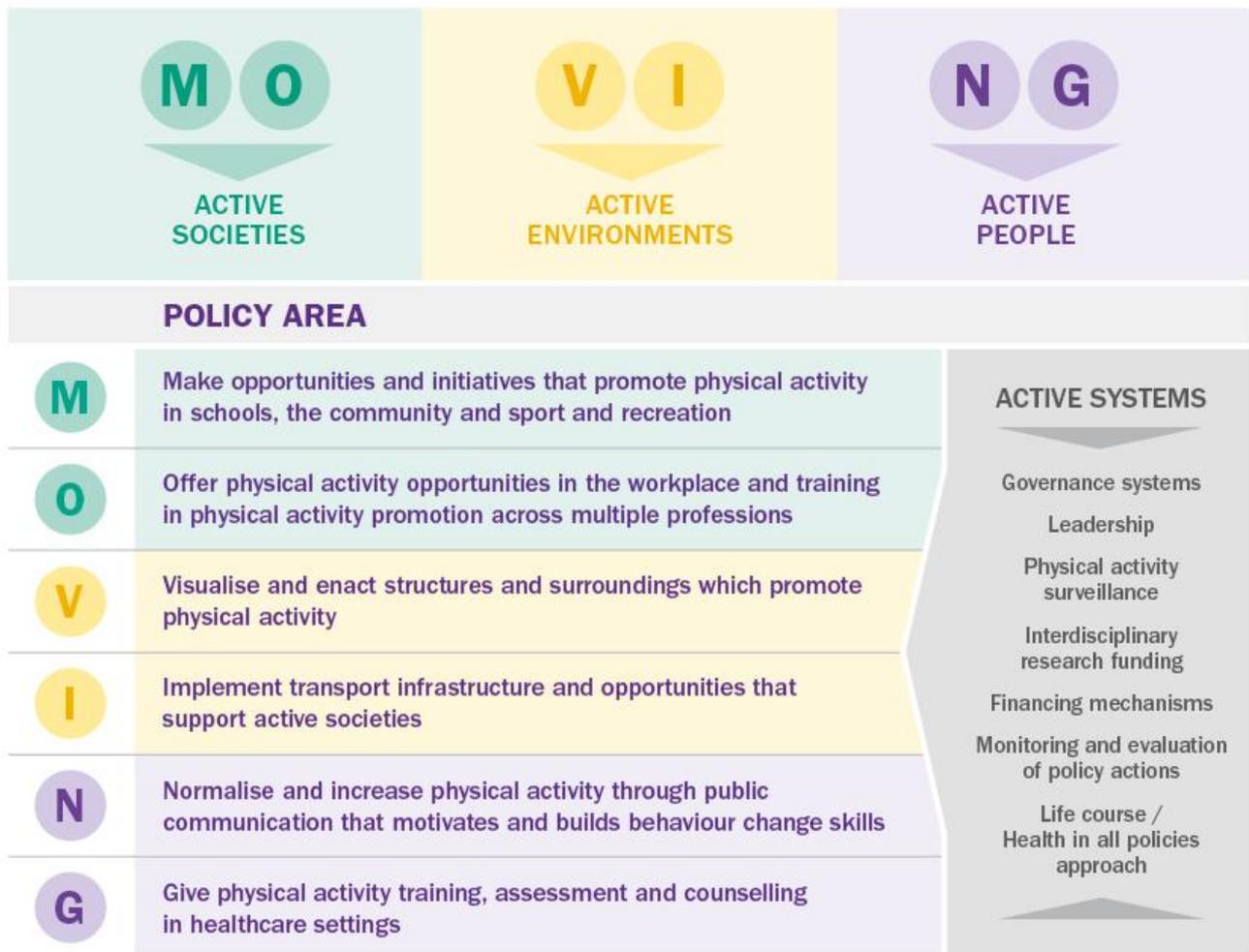
World Cancer Research Fund International launched its [NOURISHING database](#) in January 2014, structured around the NOURISHING framework. It is a library of government-implemented nutrition policy actions from around the world. The database aims to support and encourage national and international policymakers in taking comprehensive action to promote healthy diets and reduce overweight, obesity and diet-related NCDs.

⁴ It does not include policies to address undernutrition unless the policy action is serving a dual purpose.

A document describing the methods behind the NOURISHING policy database is available and is updated regularly.⁵ This was drawn up following advice from WCRF International’s Policy Advisory Group, to a) ensure that the WCRF international approach is as transparent as possible and b) increase the accuracy and replicability of the information sought.

The MOVING framework and policy database

The CO-CREATE project has provided a timely opportunity to build on the strong foundations provided by NOURISHING and develop a complementary framework on promoting physical activity. The MOVING framework is structured around three domains: active societies, active environments and active people. Within these domains are six key policy areas.⁶



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In addition, there is an overarching domain: active systems:⁷

⁵ Available to download at <https://www.wcrf.org/int/policy/nourishing/methodology>

⁶ The MOVING physical activity framework is Deliverable D2.1 within WP2, submitted 31 October 2018.

⁷ The ‘active systems’ domain has been included to align with GAPPA and note that the scope of this domain is so extensive that implemented policy actions cannot be included within the MOVING database in a fully comprehensive way. Instead, best-practice examples will be identified that illustrate the range of issues covered by active systems.

ACTIVE SYSTEMS	<p>Governance systems – includes accountability, managing conflicts of interest, roles and responsibilities for different actors.</p> <p>Leadership – promoting clear leadership to ensure physical activity is given priority.</p> <p>Physical activity surveillance – ensuring robust data collection on physical activity rates across the population is put in place.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary research funding – increased research capacity across all sectors on the rates of physical inactivity or activity and policy interventions etc.</p> <p>Financing mechanisms to fund research, surveillance and interventions.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of policy actions – incorporating monitoring and evaluation of policy actions at the outset to ensure effect is measured.</p> <p>Life course/health in all policies approach – using a lens that ensures physical activity is promoted across the whole population, across the life course, especially those that are the least active, vulnerable or have different needs.</p>
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This framework was developed by WCRF International, as part of CO-CREATE, in 2018 and is based on an analysis of the global physical activity policy literature (including the World Health Organization’s 2018 Global Action Plan for Physical Activity, GAPPA). The MOVING framework’s six policy areas and the active systems domain align with the four policy domains in the GAPPA: active societies, active environments, active people and active systems.⁸

In December 2020, we made some small refinements to the MOVING framework to improve the categorisation of policies in the different policy areas. This was prompted by our learnings from conducting the policy scan and how users access information on the database (which is outlined below). The content of the updated framework remains the same, but the way in which policies are organised in the different letters of the framework has been amended.

Policy actions underpinning the MOVING framework will be stored in a database that will sit beside and complement the NOURISHING database. The databases will be hosted on a searchable web platform.

MOVING and NOURISHING databases

Aim of the databases

The aim of presenting the NOURISHING and MOVING databases in an accessible, searchable web platform is to provide information on implemented policy actions that promote, support or encourage healthy diets and physical activity. Together, the databases form a library of implemented government policy actions that promote nutrition and physical activity around the world.

Updating the databases

The NOURISHING and MOVING databases are populated by a comprehensive European scan and global scan that is conducted on a rolling basis. The global scan consists of ongoing oversight of newsletters, listservs and research into key topics (for sources, see [Technical Annex](#)) ensures that the Policy & Public Affairs Team in WCRF International stay abreast of current debates and reforms – keeping track of future developments (revisions of

⁸ For a detailed mapping of how the GAPPA actions fit with the six MOVING policy areas, see the MOVING framework deliverable.

existing policies as well as new policy actions, and tracking strategies to see what is then turned into actual policy action). This information is assessed (section 5.2) and uploaded to the web platform about three times a year.

The Comprehensive European Scan is a one-off comprehensive search of national-level diet/nutrition and physical activity policy action in 27 European countries (section 4.3) as required by the CO-CREATE project.

Within the context of CO-CREATE, the information gathered into the NOURISHING and MOVING databases will be used to compare policy environments across Europe (see [Technical Annex](#) (section T7) for more information on this aspect of CO-CREATE). CO-CREATE will also work with young people to use this web platform for better in-country advocacy and awareness raising of what more can be done to improve implementation of policy that impacts on overweight and obesity in children and adolescents.

Target audiences

The information captured in the NOURISHING and MOVING databases can be used by stakeholders for a variety of purposes, including tracking progress and speeding up the diffusion of innovation. For example:

- **policy makers** can:
 - identify where action is needed to promote healthy diets and physical activity;
 - select and tailor options for their population and contexts, assessing if their approach is sufficiently comprehensive; and
 - see how the country is matching up to other jurisdictions (for example, other countries within the EU or a WHO region) in the scope of their efforts;
- **advocacy groups and civil society organisations** can:
 - track policy action and better choose where to focus their resources;
 - monitor what governments are doing around the world;
 - use the information in the databases to create benchmarks;
 - hold governments to account;
 - promote examples of successful interventions;
 - identify strategies that can be adapted to their local context; and
 - share progress;
- **researchers** can:
 - access a comprehensive library of data;
 - compare policy actions with health outcomes over time;
 - identify the evidence available for different policies from the policy evaluations included in the database; and
 - track progress of in-country policy actions over time;

- the public (including the media) have ready access to key health policy actions in their country.

Why a Methods Document for the databases on nutrition and physical activity policy actions?

To develop a consistent and structured approach to populating the two databases on nutrition and physical activity policy actions

Objective of the Methods Document

The objective of this Methods Document is to:

- describe how the NOURISHING and MOVING databases are populated and updated;
- underpin users' confidence about the quality of the information in the databases because of the transparent structured process.

A [Technical Annex](#) that accompanies this Methods Document describes in detail the structured processes that are used to gather and present the information.

The Methods Document spells out the what, how, who, where and when of the sourcing and verification of the policy actions that are contained within the NOURISHING and MOVING databases – both the global scan and the comprehensive European scan. It also details the way in which the presentation of the information is standardised, to smooth the transfer of information between the policy analysts, the IT expertise behind the database, and the final users of the database.

This Methods Document is both a tool that can be used to direct a scan of policy actions (i.e. the 'how-to') and the public-facing rationale for what is included in the databases (i.e. the 'why-we-did-it').

3.2 Value of the Methods Document

The value of this consistency of approach lies in making it easier to compare policy actions across jurisdictions. The structured approach ensures that the databases are suitable for use in further research by other organisations⁹ and that the information can be used to hold governments to account where implementation is found to be falling short and to call for the introduction of new or improved policy actions when a country comparison finds that national action is lagging behind what other countries are doing.

A further benefit of the Methods Document is to set out sufficient detail to allow new researchers / policy analysts to undertake a similar process for themselves. It also has the potential to be used as a template for others to draw up methods documents in different areas (e.g. alcohol policy actions).

Appendix A4 sets out the process behind developing this Methods Document itself – the research, interviews and expert opinion that was sought to make it as comprehensive and practical as possible.

⁹ WCRF International knows that the NOURISHING database is used regularly by policymakers, researchers and civil society organisations from around the world, who have welcomed it as a reliable, accurate, well-structured and user-friendly repository of implemented nutrition and health policies.

What is included in the databases?

Government-implemented or government-supported policy actions that promote healthy eating and physical activity are included

Scope of policy scans

The updates of the NOURISHING database have always had a global focus and will continue to do so. The new MOVING database will be built on the comprehensive European scan and will also include good-practice examples globally.

The comprehensive scan for both NOURISHING and MOVING will happen once during CO-CREATE. This scan will look specifically at policy action in 27 countries within Europe (listed below).

Note that details on the inclusion criteria for the policy actions are set out in section 5.2.1.

Global scan

Most policy actions in the global scan are at national level. However, the global scan also includes exemplars of policy action at **sub-national** (regional, municipal or local) level, for example:

- NOURISHING: New York City's Food Standards, which set nutritional standards for all food purchased or served by city agencies.

Comprehensive European scan

CO-CREATE stipulates that, for 27 European countries (below), the policy scan of nutrition and physical activity policy actions that is **as comprehensive as possible** – i.e. it will cover as many relevant policies as possible. It will take a systematic approach, set out in the [Technical Annex](#) to this Methods Document. It will focus on **national-level** policies only and will take place once during CO-CREATE.

The standardisation set out in the [Technical Annex](#) ensuring that benchmarks and baselines can be created and updates more easily sought, tracked and analysed. (For more on benchmarking as part of the CO-CREATE project, see [Technical Annex](#).)

Countries included in the comprehensive European scan

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| 1. Austria | 10. Germany | 20. Poland |
| 2. Belgium (includes French and Flemish)* | 11. Greece | 21. Portugal |
| 3. Bulgaria | 12. Hungary | 22. Romania |
| 4. Croatia | 13. Ireland | 23. Slovakia |
| 5. Czech Republic | 14. Italy | 24. Slovenia |
| 6. Denmark | 15. Latvia | 25. Spain |
| 7. Estonia | 16. Lithuania | 26. Sweden |
| 8. Finland | 17. Malta | 27. UK (includes Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, and Wales)** |
| 9. France | 18. Netherlands | |
| | 19. Norway | |

The countries chosen for inclusion were dictated by the wider aims of CO-CREATE:

- 1) As an initiative funded by the EU Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, countries within the European Union are the focus.
- 2) A further aim of the CO-CREATE project is to study the association between policy environments (of which NOURISHING/MOVING scans are a part) and the prevalence rates of childhood obesity. For this study to be consistent, data collection on prevalence must also be consistent – and the HBSC (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children) Survey has been chosen as the appropriate source of data. Hence, only countries with data available in the HBSC Survey 2013/14 for youth aged 15 can be included here (e.g. Cyprus is not part of the Survey and are therefore omitted). This age has been selected due to the relevance to the overall project.
- 3) The five Co-CREATE Project Countries (Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom).

*N.B. The distinction between Belgium (French) and Belgium (Flemish) is included to be in line with the categorisation from the HBSC survey.

**N.B. England, Scotland, & Wales are included in the HBSC survey, and we have also added Northern Ireland for completeness of the United Kingdom country-dataset.

The NOURISHING database will continue to be updated regularly, based on the ten policy areas and following the existing methods document.

The new MOVING database will also be updated across the six policy areas. Additionally, a small number of policy actions related to **‘active systems’** will be included on the policy database, for example: governance systems, leadership, physical activity surveillance, interdisciplinary research funding, and financing mechanisms to fund research, surveillance and interventions.

How do policies make it into the database?

A structured search for policy actions is undertaken, with those identified as possibilities for inclusion then subject to in-house research, assessment and verification by external experts

Search strategy and sources

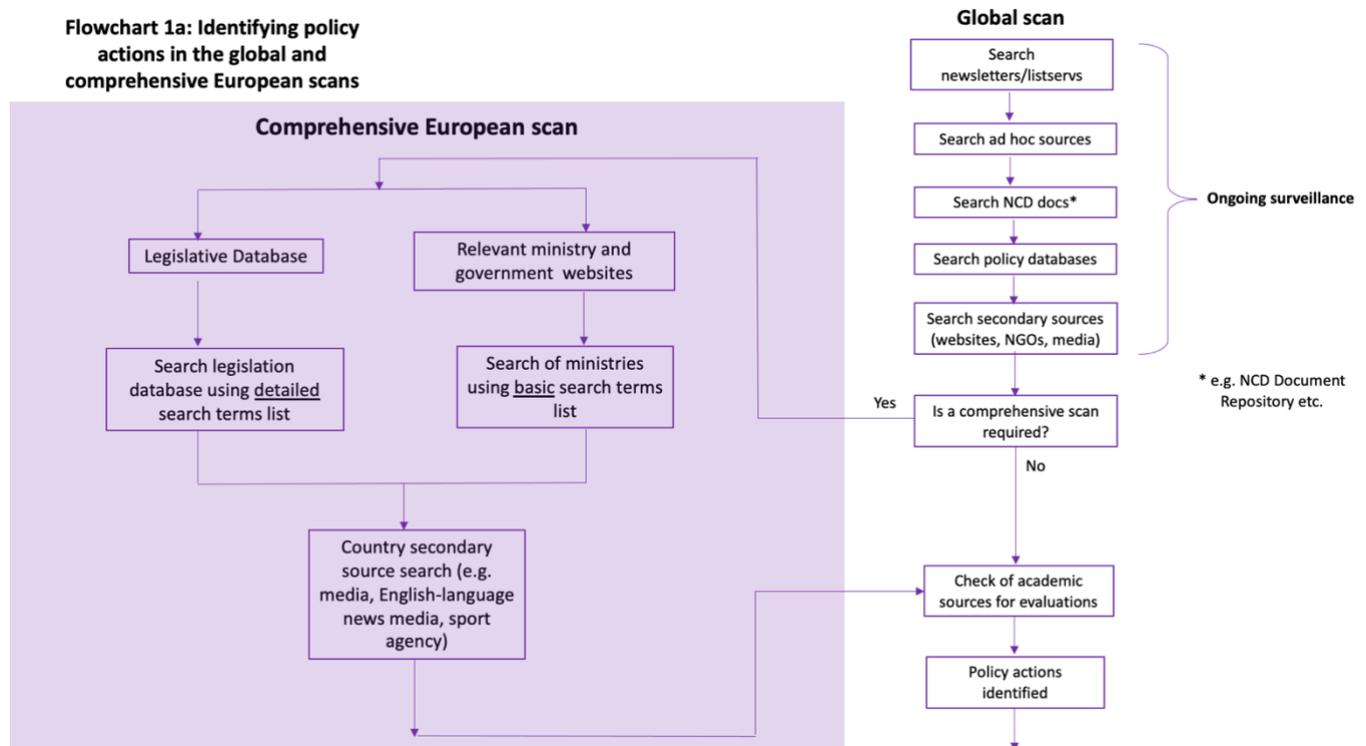
Search strategy

Search strategies for the scans must be transparent and reproducible to ensure that the information gathered is consistent across countries; this is particularly important if several policy analysts are involved in the search process. An in-depth search protocol also ensures that the scan is as comprehensive as possible – using the same search terms and using the equivalent sources within each country.

To help structure the databases, the policy areas of NOURISHING and MOVING are organised into sub-policy areas (these are listed in Appendix A1). This effectively groups policy actions into more specific sub-policy areas, which helps people navigating the databases. The existing NOURISHING database is organised by these sub-policy areas and the new web platform will also take this approach.

Flowchart 1a outlines the strategy that is used by policy analysts in undertaking the global scan of nutrition and physical activity policy actions (as has been used in the NOURISHING updating process since 2014) and the extra steps required for the comprehensive European scan. The global scan is ongoing and CO-CREATE requires that the comprehensive European scan be undertaken once.

More detail on this process, including search terms (which have already been identified), is provided in the [Technical Annex](#) to this Methods Document.



Sources of information

Having a clear idea of where to look online before beginning the scan will save time and effort. WCRF International and experts have identified a range of sources, below, as being appropriate (and the [Technical Annex](#) then provides a more detailed list of sources, including URLs).

1. There are many sources of relevant **NCD documentation**, including the WHO NCD Document Repository and WHO Europe’s physical activity factsheets. Reports from international agencies can also provide valuable insights (e.g. WHO, European Commission’s Joint Research Centre).

2. **Policy databases and surveys** collect information about and can be searched for recent policy actions – both internationally (e.g. the WHO GINA database) or nationally (e.g. the Canadian Prevention Policies Directory or the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity’s Legislation Database).

3. **Secondary sources**: include **national organisations**, such as the national sports body, **newsletters** (e.g. World Obesity Federation (global) and NYC Food Policy Watch (USA)), **listservs** (e.g. Center for Science in the Public Interest SSB listserv), **national media** (e.g. the BBC) and **civil society websites** (e.g. NCD Alliance or national consumer websites).

4. **Ad hoc sources** are often valuable, such as conversations with policymakers or experts at meetings, communications sent by users of the databases with suggestions for updates. There will also be incidental discoveries of information, through unexpected and unanticipated channels. In-country contacts are sources of up-to-date information on policy actions (including being able to comment on implementation – see section 5.3.2 and [Technical Annex](#)). Users of the database are encouraged to submit implemented policy actions to the Policy & Public Affairs Team for review and verification.

Google will be used for an initial overview and to check for any new policy databases (national, regional or global), to search for recent news, and to find information in more detail than may appear in official government websites.

Academic sources are particularly important for searching for evaluations of policy actions. Electronic databases such as PubMed are used to access relevant articles.

Note that the [Technical Annex](#) sets out how policy actions are stored and recorded within WCRF International.

Example search terms for NCD documentation and policy databases

[country name] + physical activity
+ policy

Secondary sources

- provide context
- assist in initial identification of relevant policies
- narrow the scope of the data being collected
- check that everything is being picked up
- are helpful where official websites contain information/policies only in the local language
- can be used as a quality-control check of the data

Extra steps and sources for the comprehensive European scan

Compiling a list of national sources – e.g. relevant ministries – is one of the first steps to be taken in the comprehensive scan of a specific country.

Ministry websites, government websites and legislative databases will be searched (using pre-defined search terms), including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Education. (The detailed and basic search terms are set out in the Technical Annex – these may be adapted during the comprehensive European scan. The search terms are based on the sub-policy areas of NOURISHING and MOVING, to ensure a structured approach.

In-country secondary sources are also searched, including news media and any national sports agency.

Example search terms for legislation databases

physical activity
 AND primary care
 AND assessment OR referral
 OR counselling

Example basic search terms for ministry & government websites

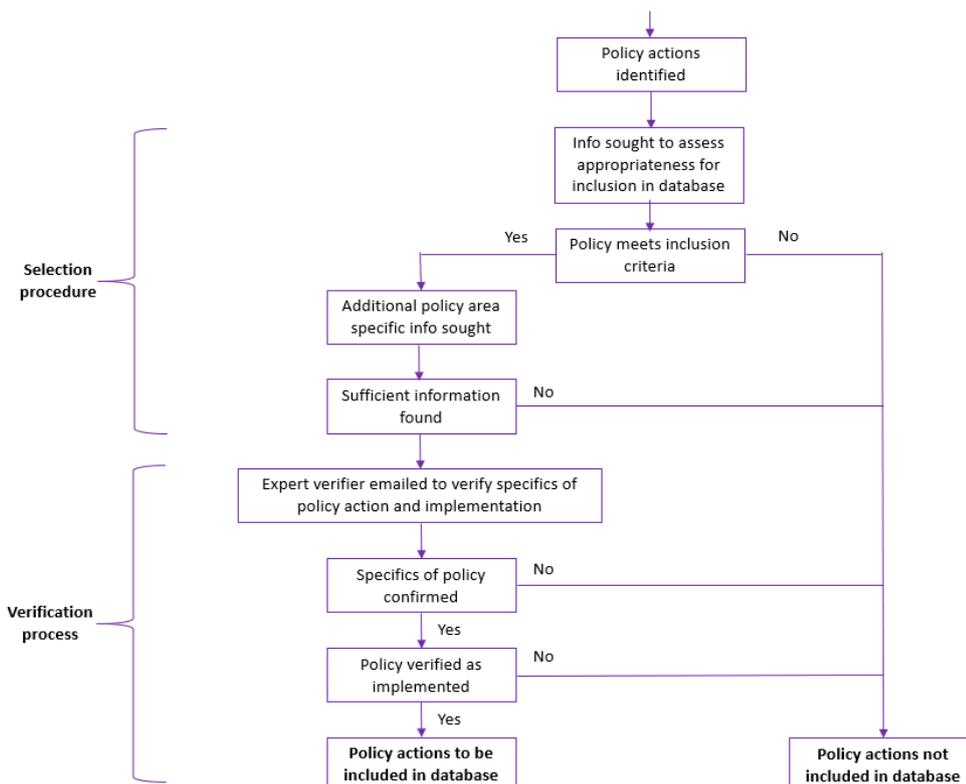
nutrition
 AND primary care OR
 counselling

This approach to the comprehensive European scan was developed and tested during preliminary scans of Ireland, Malta, France and Denmark, undertaken in December 2018/January 2019. An extra step tested during that time included a primary search in legislation databases. This was found to produce results that were not sufficiently targeted. As a result, this step was supplemented by searches of ministry and government databases for each country, regardless of whether a legislative database is available or not.

More detail on the in-country sources that should be scanned as part of the comprehensive European search is in Appendix A2.

Policy selection

The policy selection and verification processes are shown on Flowchart 1b.



Flowchart 1b: Policy selection procedure and verification process*

* This process is the same for the global scan and for the comprehensive European scan

A structured approach is taken to identifying policies, using the sources set out above (and in the [Technical Annex](#)) and the methods already tested in NOURISHING (extended to include physical activity). This includes a targeted search (using academic electronic databases) to check for peer-reviewed evaluations of the already verified policy actions.

Once identified, each policy action is researched to ensure that sufficient information is available for its inclusion in the database.

Official government websites are often where the official versions of policies are stored and should be consulted to find the original document as part of the assessment of appropriateness of a policy action for inclusion in the database, wherever possible. However, policies do not need to be publicly available online for inclusion in the databases: some countries do not publish their legislation online, so secondary sources will be key sources of information.

A note on language (see also [Technical Annex](#)): It is common for information on policies relevant to NOURISHING/MOVING to be in languages other than English. When this is the case, a web search is conducted to locate additional information about the policy, in-country expert(s) may be consulted, in-house foreign language capabilities are used where available and, where necessary, Google Translate and/or linguee.com is used to interpret foreign-language information sources on specific policies to assess their appropriateness for the database.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for policy actions

The inclusion criteria for the NOURISHING and MOVING databases set out the types of policy actions to be included, the required implementation status, and the characteristics of the policies that will be included.

The aim of the inclusion criteria is to ensure that the scan can pick up as much relevant information as possible in a streamlined way: it is as comprehensive as possible, but by the time of publication may not be exhaustive.

This list of inclusion criteria for policy actions draws heavily on the NOURISHING inclusion criteria, which have been tested in practice over the last five years, providing valuable proof of concept. The additional requirement to perform a scan in specific European countries (listed in section 5.3) that is ‘as comprehensive as possible’ has meant that the criteria and search process have been amended to ensure that as many national-level policy actions as possible are identified.

1. Must be a government action, an action implemented in partnership with government, or an action that is formally supported, sponsored or endorsed by government

- Programmes or interventions run by non-governmental actors (such as civil society organisations or the private sector) are included *only* if these actions are supported, sponsored or endorsed by government. Such government support has to be publicly communicated and may consist of financial sponsorship or an endorsement (public statement of support) by government.

2. Must be at relevant level of government

- Global scan: For inclusion in the NOURISHING and MOVING global scan, policies can be at national, regional, provincial/territorial, municipal or local level. (NB It is not the intention to collect all regional, provincial/territorial, municipal or local level policy actions, but exemplar policy actions are included.)

- Comprehensive European scan: The comprehensive scan will seek out *national*-level policies only.

3. Must be related to reducing obesity and/or diet-related NCDs by promoting healthy diets or physical activity

- The policy action may have multiple objectives (e.g. health, environmental sustainability etc.), but public health must be a clear aim or co-benefit (e.g. improving nutrition, reducing overweight/obesity, increasing availability of healthy food, increasing active travel, increasing the time children spend on physical activity in school).
- Additionally, policy actions will be considered for inclusion in the database where there are clear benefits for healthy diet and/or physical activity; inclusion of these policies is made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Policy & Public Affairs team within WCRF International.

4. Must be related to one of the policy areas outlined in the NOURISHING and MOVING frameworks

- Policies must fit within the scope of the NOURISHING framework's 10 policy areas or of the MOVING framework's six policy areas. These are then categorised within sub-policy areas, by which the database and web platform are structured (see Appendix A1).
- If a policy action cuts across both NOURISHING and MOVING, the action appears twice – once in each of the two databases.
- Where a policy fits one of the NOURISHING/MOVING policy areas but does not directly fit one of the existing sub-policy areas in that policy area, sub-policy areas can be added or edited to appropriately reflect the policy actions.

5. Must be implemented and in force

- The policy action, law or regulation must be implemented wholly or in part. For example, draft or model laws, policy proposals, election commitments and laws that have been passed but not come into effect are not included in the databases.
- Policy implementation is a complex change process and therefore can involve several stages or levels of implementation. For the purpose of updating the database, implementation is defined as the point in time at which an adopted policy (or component of policy) first comes into effect.
- Exceptions:
 - When a policy has 'expired', been withdrawn or is no longer enforced, it remains in the public-facing database *only if it has been evaluated* (see section 4.2.3 and the [Technical Annex](#)). Where possible, a brief explanation of the reason for the policy 'expiring' is included (e.g. a change of government).
 - Public awareness campaigns, either run by or endorsed by government (included in 'I – Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness' in NOURISHING and 'N – Normalise and increase physical activity through public communication' in MOVING) may also remain in the policy database even if they are no longer running as they often last for only a short time. The summary of the campaign includes the start and end date. To be included, a campaign must have taken place in the past five years and have had national scope; after this time, it is retained only if it has been evaluated.

Section 5.3 sets out the verification process that is in place to ensure that an in-country expert has verified that policies included in the database have been implemented or partially implemented *in practice*. More detail is also provided in the [Technical Annex](#).

6. Must be sufficient information about the policy action

- There must be sufficient information about the policy action. In addition to the name of the policy, the date of implementation of the policy and a link to any published evaluation of the policy, policy descriptions for each of the policy areas within NOURISHING and MOVING require additional information (a guide to which is set out in the [Technical Annex](#)). If this information cannot be provided (either by desk research or by the in-country contacts), the policy action will not be included – this is at the discretion of the Policy & Public Affairs Team at WCRF International.
- Examples of additional information include:
 - within ‘O’ of NOURISHING (Offer healthy food and set standards in public institutions and other specific settings): the type of institution and what is covered within the institution’s premises;
 - within ‘N’ of MOVING (Normalise and increase physical activity through public communication that motivates and builds behaviour change skills): the types of media used e.g. TV, radio, social media, website, brochures.

Additional exclusion criteria

Policies related to the following are not included:

- undernutrition, breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding – these were not included in the existing NOURISHING database and are not a requirement of CO-CREATE;
- alcohol policies – these are outside the scope of NOURISHING and are not a requirement of CO-CREATE;
- professional sport – the MOVING database is concerned with health-enhancing physical activity, not professional sport.

Inclusion criteria for evaluations

Since October 2016, a phased approach has been taken to include existing evaluations of policy actions that have been verified in the NOURISHING database, and this is now also applied to the MOVING database.

Evaluations have to fulfil a number of requirements to be considered for inclusion, including that they must be available online in English and are of sufficient quality (for more information, see the [Technical Annex](#)).

Updating the inclusion criteria

The process is iterative: a test scan was undertaken in December 2018 using the inclusion criteria, search process, search terms and sources, which were then revised to overcome identified problems. For example:

- Through our experience, we found that conducting searches on legislative databases produced numerous and impractical results, with many not relevant for the purpose of the search. Therefore, the legislative database search was supplemented by a basic search on government and ministry websites, which was found to be a more targeting search strategy, producing more relevant results.
- an initial inclusion criterion that ‘health is a stated aim’ of a policy action was altered to ‘public health must be a clear aim or co-benefit’.

Advice has also been given by expert advisors (including from the World Health Organization) on the inclusion criteria.

Verifying the policies

It is crucial to have verification on the information gathered on policy actions – and, although it can often be a challenge to get the policy actions verified for inclusion in the database and web platform, this is an essential

final step in the process. It is anticipated that in many countries two expert verifiers will be required – one in nutrition and one in physical activity. Initially, the expert was contacted at the end of the scanning process and was asked to verify the identified information. However, it became clear that the process would be faster if we contact the experts at the beginning of the scanning process to make them aware of the project and ask them to provide us with any information they think could be relevant and help us with our search.

Drafting the description

The verification experts¹⁰ can be used early in the search process, when insufficient information can be found to draft the policy description for the database. This may be because sources of information on policy actions are insufficiently documented on official or secondary-source websites or because there are too few resources available in English. The experts may also be able to direct the policy analysts to available documentation. For an example of the email sent to the verification experts, as well as the document with the policy descriptions please refer to the Technical Annex.

Verifying the descriptions

The policy descriptions are sent to the experts to check for accuracy and to confirm that it is being implemented; the definition of ‘implemented’ may be somewhat subjective, requiring a perspective to be sought from more than one in-country expert.

There may be cases where the WCRF International Policy & Public Affairs Team have to determine whether to include a policy: for example, if a tax on an unhealthy commodity has been enacted, is the tax being collected by the government?

Verification of the description is required for all policy actions included in the NOURISHING and MOVING databases.

Presentation of policies

Format of public-facing material

All entries in the NOURISHING and MOVING databases must include as a minimum:

- the name of the policy action (e.g. name of campaign, or title of an act);
- the date on which the policy action was implemented; and
- a reference and link to any published evaluation of the policy action (URLs to the original documentation of policy actions are not included in the databases, as these are likely to change over time).

Note: **Quality control** is intrinsic to the process:

- drafts of the Methods Document were reviewed by experts in both nutrition and physical activity;
- the preliminary scan ensured that the methods are fit for purpose (and the methods document was adapted accordingly); and
- verification by in-country experts ensures that all the policies in the database are appropriate for inclusion.

¹⁰ More information on the verification experts is provided in the [Technical Annex](#). The experts are anticipated to include WHO in-country experts.

In addition, each of the policy actions then requires additional information (set out in the [Technical Annex](#)) – this acts as a guide to ensure that the information that is collected is as consistent as possible: a helpful compare-and-contrast for users. The policy actions in the database are all summarised in layman’s terms (i.e. in plain English). The purpose of the database is not to discuss or comment on the policies, but users of the database are well placed to then research this for themselves.

Tagging

Consistent storage of and accurate tagging of material is crucial to the ongoing utility and accuracy of the databases. Structured storage and labelling of the information facilitates easier updating in the future and tagging allows users of the database to find the information that they need quickly and easily.

Every policy action entered in the NOURISHING and MOVING databases is tagged with the relevant geography and with a number of topic-specific tags. Currently, 50 topic tags make up the taxonomy of the NOURISHING database (with three more proposed) and 56 of the MOVING database (see Appendix A3). The tags are amended or added to as and when new areas for action come to the fore. The system of tags in the NOURISHING database has been used since October 2017, so has been tested to show it is fit for purpose.

Limitations and challenges

Limitations

While the European scan will attempt to be as comprehensive as possible, it cannot be exhaustive or fully up to date when launched, due to several reasons:

- Legislation is constantly changing – e.g. it may be timebound or the government may change between scan and publication. It can only be accurate as at the day on which each website is scanned, and the comprehensive search will take a considerable amount of time.
- The level of implementation may also vary – it will be verified by in-country experts but the reality on the ground may be patchy.
- It addresses only national action but, as noted above, much of the innovation and policy action may be at regional/local (e.g. at city level). While examples are captured and included as exemplars as part of the wider global scan, this cannot be, and is not intended to be, comprehensive.

In addition:

- Language will be a limitation in the scanning process. Google Translate and linguee.com will be used to translate search results (see [Technical Annex](#)). Various versions of the search terms are tested on the ministry websites in order to identify the appropriate policy term in the respective language. Further, the translations are assessed for accuracy as part of the verification process.
- WCRF International does not currently have the means to use a paid-for, automated service to sweep for the latest legislation in specific jurisdictions – and there is no single global service that could perform this function. However, machine-learning/AI techniques will make automated searching quicker, cheaper and more effective over the next few years, so may be an option in the future.
- It is not possible to be completely sure of the level of implementation of policies – for example, the reporting of in-country verification experts may include conscious or unconscious biases.

There are also specific limitations on the inclusion criteria, which are driven by the practicalities of undertaking the scans:

- If all proposed policies, as well as those no longer in force, remained in the public-facing database, it could **rapidly become unwieldy** for users.¹¹ This has prompted an exception to the rule, that policies no longer in force are removed: policies that have been evaluated (process and impact evaluations), will be retained within the database (along with relevant links) because of the lasting value of the evaluation to users.
- The comprehensive European scan cannot realistically cover regional, provincial/territorial, municipal and local level policy action, as this would require a commitment of resource and time that is out of scope. However, the global scan, which ongoing and thorough but not as structured as the comprehensive European scan, will continue to cover policy actions at sub-national level (see section 4.2).

Challenges

This process is not without its challenges.

- The verification of policy actions with in-country experts is a time-consuming process, which might differ between countries. Experience so far has showed that the process might take up to six months to be completed as the in-country contact can be very busy, which affects their responsiveness. In addition, sometimes it is also challenging to find an in-country expert who agrees to help with the verification process. These challenges can bear significant consequences on the process of updating the databases
- Physical activity policy is often less obvious than nutrition policy – for example, there is no equivalent in physical activity to a ban on trans fats. While there are some clear physical activity policy actions (such as national curriculum requirements), many of the policy actions that affect physical activity are indirect: speed limits and vehicle emissions penalties.
- There is a relative lack of information on physical activity policy actions: There are many databases of legislation, policy and policy action in the nutrition space, particularly in the United States – but fewer that touch on physical activity (see list in [Technical Annex](#)). However, it is a growing space and WCRF International has consulted widely with experts to find the best sources of information.
- There may not be much policy action at national level in physical activity, as innovation and action often sits more locally. The inclusion criteria need to be drawn up in a way that captures as much as possible, as it is not feasible to conduct a comprehensive scan at a sub-national level.

¹¹ Some policy databases (such as the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity’s legislation database) do include proposed, unimplemented and out-of-date policies – see [Technical Annex](#) – but an advantage of the NOURISHING/MOVING approach is that the streamlining makes it easier for users to identify what is actually in force.

Appendix A1: NOURISHING and MOVING sub-policy areas and policy options

The MOVING and NOURISHING frameworks are organised as a hierarchy: a small number of overarching domains, the key policy areas and a number of sub-policy areas. The sub-policy areas are used to structure the way that the policy actions are presented in the database and web platform (see [Technical Annex](#) for an example).

The sub-policy areas can be altered according to changing circumstances – for example if an innovative policy begins to be used and needs adding as a sub-policy area.

A1.1 NOURISHING

NOURISHING comprises three domains – the food environment, food system and behaviour change communication. Within these domains are 10 key policy areas, which are divided into a number of sub-policy areas around which the database and web platform are structured.

Domain	Policy area	Sub-policy area
Food environment	Nutrition label standards and regulations on the use of claims and implied claims on foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory nutrient lists on packaged food • Trans fats included in mandatory nutrient labels • Clearly visible ‘interpretative’ labels and warning label • On-shelf labelling • Calorie and nutrient labelling on menus and displays in out-of-home venues • Warning labels on menu and displays in out-of-home venues • Rules on nutrient claims (i.e. nutrient content and nutrient comparative claims) • Rules on health claims (i.e. nutrient function and disease risk reduction claims)
	Offer healthy food and set standards in public institutions and other specific settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit and veg initiatives in schools • Mandatory standards for food available in schools, including restrictions on unhealthy food • Mandatory standards for food available in schools and in their immediate vicinity • Voluntary guidelines for food available in schools • Bans specific to vending machines in schools • Standards in social support programmes • Standards in other specific locations (e.g. health facilities, workplaces)
	Use economic tools to address food affordability and purchase incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health-related food taxes • Voluntary health-related food taxes • Increasing import tariffs on specified ‘unhealthy’ food • Lowering import tariffs on specified ‘healthy’ food • Targeted subsidies for healthy food
	Restrict food advertising and other forms of commercial promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory regulation of broadcast food advertising to children • Mandatory regulation of food advertising on non-broadcast communications channels • Mandatory regulation of food advertising through any medium

Domain	Policy area	Sub-policy area
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory regulation of specific marketing techniques • Mandatory regulation of marketing of specific food items and beverage • Mandatory regulation of food marketing in schools • Mandatory requirement that ads must carry a health message or warning • Government engage with industry to develop self-regulation to restrict food marketing to children • Government support voluntary pledges developed by industry
	Improve nutritional quality of the whole food supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary reformulation of food products • Voluntary commitments to reduce portion sizes • Mandatory limits on level of salt in food products • Mandatory removal of trans fats in food products • Limits on the availability of high-fat meat products • Limits on the availability of high-sugar food products and beverages
	Set incentives and rules to create a healthy retail and food service environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives and rules for stores to locate in underserved neighbourhoods • Initiatives to increase the availability of healthier food in stores and food service outlets • Incentives and rules to reduce trans fat in food service outlets • Incentives and rules to offer healthy food options as a default in food service outlets • Incentives and rules to restrict SSB consumption • Incentives and rules to reduce salt in food service outlets • Planning restrictions on food outlets
Food system	Harness supply chain and actions across sectors to ensure coherence with health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with food suppliers to provide healthier ingredients • Nutrition standards for public procurement • Public procurement through 'short' chains (e.g. local farmers) • Supply chain incentives for food production • Supporting urban agriculture in health and planning policies • Community food production • Governance structures for multi-sectoral/stakeholder engagement
Behaviour change communication	Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and communication of food-based dietary guidelines • Development and communication of guidelines for specific food groups • Public awareness, mass media and informational campaigns and social marketing on healthy eating • Public awareness campaigns specific to fruit and veg • Public awareness campaigns concerning specific unhealthy food and beverages • Public awareness campaigns concerning salt
	Nutrition advice and counselling in healthcare settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines and progs to provide support in primary care to people who are overweight and obese • Nutrition counselling in primary care • Training for health professionals

Domain	Policy area	Sub-policy area
	Give nutrition education and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition education on curricula • Community-based nutrition education • Cooking skills • Initiatives to train schoolchildren on growing food • Workplace or community health schemes • Training for caterers and food service providers

A1.2 MOVING

MOVING aligns with the 2018 WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) in organising policy actions into four domains: active societies, active environments and active people, together with active systems. Within these domains are six key policy areas, which are divided into a number of sub-policy areas around which the database and web platform are structured.

Domain	Policy area	Sub-policy area
Active societies	Make opportunities and initiatives that promote physical activity a priority in schools, the community and sport and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical education in the curriculum • Policies increasing physical activity in and outside of classrooms • Policies promoting/supporting physical activity for least active groups and vulnerable/ marginalised people • Policies promoting/supporting physical activity for people of all ages and abilities • Community initiatives promoting physical activity across the life course • Mass participation initiatives promoting physical activity across the life course • Financial and non-financial incentives to promote physical activity
	Offer physical activity opportunities in the workplace and training in physical activity promotion across multiple professions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-and in-service training for sport educators/trainers on inclusive sport • Pre-and in-service training for relevant professions outside of health care (such as educators, architects, planners, landscape architects, park and recreation professionals) • Policies promoting physical activity in the workplace
Active environments	Visualise and enact structures and surroundings which promote physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design guidelines and regulations for buildings that prioritise equitable, safe, and universal access by all, that encourage occupants to be physically active • Active design guidelines outside buildings • Active design guidelines for people of all ages and abilities • Active design guidelines for open/green spaces

Domain	Policy area	Sub-policy area
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking and cycling infrastructure • Infrastructure for sport facilities • Integrated urban design and land-use policies prioritising compact, mixed-land use. • Policies that support access to quality public open space and green spaces • Policies that support people of all ages and abilities considered and accounted for in all planning decisions
	<p>Implement transport infrastructure and opportunities that support active societies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies that support public transport • Road safety actions including safety of pedestrians, cyclists etc. • Mass communication campaigns to increase awareness about road safety • Mass communication campaigns to promote the use of public transport • Mass communication campaigns to promote active transport • Policies promoting active transport • Policies promoting active transport to and from school • Policies promoting active transport to and from work
Active people	<p>Normalise and increase physical activity through public communication that motivates and builds behaviour change skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass communication campaigns including social marketing to increase awareness and knowledge about benefits of physical activity through the life course. • Mass communication campaigns including social marketing to change social norms about the accessibility and need for physical activity. • Mass communication campaigns to increase awareness of co-benefits of physical activity (environment, social, and economic) through the life course. • Mass communication campaigns to change social norms about discrimination and gender equality in sport • Develop and communicate physical activity guidelines
	<p>Give physical activity training, assessment and counselling in healthcare settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre- and in-service training within health care • Primary care (assessment, counselling and physical activity prescriptions) • Policies that promote physical activity in health care and outpatient settings • Policies that promote physical activity in social provision

In addition, there is an overarching domain in MOVING: active systems. This does not have sub-policy areas or identified policy options – and note that the scope of the ‘active systems’ domain is so extensive that implemented policy actions cannot be included in the comprehensive European scan.

Active systems	<p>Governance systems – includes accountability, managing conflicts of interest, roles and responsibilities for different actors.</p> <p>Leadership – promoting clear leadership to ensure physical activity is given priority.</p> <p>Physical activity surveillance – ensuring robust data collection on physical activity rates across the population is put in place.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary research funding – increased research capacity across all sectors on the rates of physical inactivity or activity and policy interventions etc.</p> <p>Financing mechanisms to fund research, surveillance and interventions.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of policy actions – incorporating monitoring and evaluation of policy actions at the outset to ensure effect is measured.</p> <p>Life course/health in all policies approach – using a lens that ensures physical activity is promoted across the whole population, across the life course, especially those that are the least active, vulnerable or have different needs.</p>
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Appendix A2: In-country sources

A systematic approach to how many and which sources to scan provides consistency across the countries analysed for the comprehensive European scan. Below are the national-level organisations whose websites may be searched for policies.

	Nutrition	Physical activity
Government websites	Legislation database Ministry of health Ministry of public health Ministry of finance Ministry of education Ministry responsible for food Ministry of labour Ministry of trade Ministry of the environment Ministry of agriculture Ministry responsible for youth Ministry responsible for consumer affairs/media/culture	Legislation database_ Ministry of health Ministry of public health Ministry of finance Ministry of education Ministry of transport Ministry responsible for environment Ministry responsible for sport/recreation Ministry of labour Ministry of communities/local government (urban design/planning) Ministry responsible for youth Ministry responsible for consumer affairs/media/culture
Other organisations	Youth agency National consumer organisation Major disease-specific/obesity NGOs	Government-supported sport agency Youth agency Major disease-specific/obesity/sport NGOs
Media	News media	News media

Appendix A3: Database tags

A3.1 Tags used in the NOURISHING database (50 – June 2020)

Adolescents	Fast food restaurants	Multi-sector	Supply chain
Adults	Fat	Nutrient claims	Tax
Advertising	Front-of-pack	Nutrient profile model	Traffic light
Apps	Fruit and veg	Portion size	Trans fats
Campaigns	Gardens	Pre-school children	University
Catering	Healthcare professionals	Procurement	Urban agriculture
Children	Hospitals	Reformulation	Vending machines
Civil society	Import duty	Salt	Voluntary measures
Cooking skills	Label	Saturated fat	Warning
Curriculum	Low-income	Schools	Wholegrain
Dietary guidelines	Marketing	Sugar	Workplace
Digital marketing	Menus	Sugary drinks	Young people
Energy drinks		Sugary drinks tax	

A3.2 Tags proposed for use in the MOVING database (56 – as of June 2020)

Active travel	Disability	Older people	Programmes
Adolescents	Financial incentives	Open space	Public transport
Adults	Funding	Outdoor activities	Road safety
Air pollution	Gender	Physical activity advice	Schools
Apps	Grant scheme	Physical activity as treatment	Sedentary behaviour
Behavioural change	Green space	Physical activity guidelines	Sports facilities
Building design	Guidance for professionals	Physical activity promotion	Sport safety
Campaigns	Health conditions	Physical activity training	Tax
Children	Healthcare professionals	Physical activity training	Toolkit
Civil society	Incentives	Physical education	Town planning
Counselling	Leisure activities	Planning	Universities
Curriculum	Low-income	Pregnant	Walking
Cycling	Marginalised people	Pre-school children	Workplace
Cycling infrastructure	Mental health		Voluntary measures
Design guidelines			Young people

Appendix A4: Development of the Methods Document

A4.1 Process timeline

Date (2018–19)	Process	External review?
Sept–Oct	Review existing NOURISHING methods document and database, identify and interview relevant external database stakeholders, identify External Review Group (see A2.2 below)	
Oct	Develop zero draft of Methods Document	
Nov	Share zero draft for internal consultation within WCRF International	
Nov	Incorporate internal feedback into first draft	
Nov	First draft reviewed by External Review Group (see A4.3 below)	✓
Nov	Incorporate external feedback into second draft	
Dec	Share second draft for internal consultation within WCRF International	
Dec	Incorporate internal feedback	
Dec–Jan	Use this draft to do a preliminary European physical activity policy scan (i.e. the Methods Document policy analyst and one other WCRF staff member undertake a ‘light’ testing of the methods)	
Jan	Analyse test results with other WCRF International staff and incorporate into third draft	
Jan	Third draft reviewed by External Review Group	✓
Feb	Incorporate external feedback into fourth draft	
mid-Feb	Present fourth draft at expert face-to-face meeting in London (see A4.5 below)	✓
Feb	Incorporate feedback from expert face-to-face meeting The Interim Methods Document is now finalised	
Feb	Project quality assurance by CO-CREATE (Norwegian Institute of Public Health)	✓
28 Feb	Submit the Interim Methods Document to the European Commission as deliverable D2.3 of WP2	

A4.2 Research

A4.2.1 Start point: existing knowledge

The start point for the Methods Document was a) the existing NOURISHING methods document and b) the experience of the WCRF International staff who have been responsible for updating the NOURISHING database. Regular meetings with these staff were held throughout the process, drawing both on their experience of the practical application of the NOURISHING methods document and other knowledge such as that obtained at a Temple University (USA) convening event that looked in detail at the discipline of policy surveillance within public health (January 2018).

A4.2.2 Comparator databases and interviews

Many policy databases were identified (see list in the [Technical Annex](#)), of which 12 were selected for further research and follow-up by interview, to ascertain their methods and learn from their experience. (See section A5.)

A4.3 Reviewers

A4.3.1 Internal expertise

WCRF International has significant in-house expertise on nutrition and physical activity policy and also on the practicalities of updating the policy database.

- Katy Cooper, Policy Analyst (author of this Methods Document and Technical Annex)
- Bryony Sinclair, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Manager (led NOURISHING updates to end 2018)
- Fiona Sing, Policy and Public Affairs Manager (leads NOURISHING updates)
- Professor Martin Wiseman, Medical and Scientific Advisor
- Louise Meincke, Head of Policy and Public Affairs
- Dr Giota Mitrou, Acting Director of Research and Public Affairs

A4.3.2 External Review Group

The External Review Group,¹² who advised on this Methods Document, are drawn from:

- a subgroup of WCRF International's Policy Advisory Group, which was set up in 2015 – and some of whom were also involved in drawing up the NOURISHING methods document; and
- academics and practitioners, whose expertise was solicited specifically for this project – these include experts with whom WCRF International has worked in the past and others who were approached for their knowledge of relevant areas (i.e. nutrition, physical activity and policy scanning).

The External Review Group had two opportunities to comment on the Methods Document: in November 2018 on the first draft and then again in January 2019 on the third draft.

A4.4 Iteration

In December 2018, a preliminary scan using the process and search terms set out in the Methods Document was undertaken by policy analysts at WCRF International. The learning from this was incorporated into the Methods Document, adding nuance and helping to balance aspiration and practicality.

A note on a future iteration: The Methods Document will be updated with learning from the full comprehensive European scan of national nutrition and physical activity policies. This is why the version of the Methods Document submitted to the European Commission in February 2019 is the 'Interim' Methods Document.

A4.5 Face-to-face expert meeting

The draft Methods Document was presented at a face-to-face CO-CREATE expert meeting held in February 2019 (Deliverable 2.7 of CO-CREATE).

The primary aim of this meeting was to validate the benchmarks for both nutrition and physical activity policy actions, which will inform the policy index to assess and grade the policy status of a country (for

¹² Members of the External Review Group are listed in the Acknowledgements to this Methods Document.

more on the benchmarking and policy index – themselves deliverables of the CO-CREATE project – see [Technical Annex](#)). However, an important supplementary aim was briefly to present the Methods Document (in near-final form) and to solicit and encourage feedback on the Methods Document (following the meeting) from this new group of experts. These suggestions have been incorporated in the interim final version submitted at the end of February.

Appendix A5. Policy database interviews

An important aspect of the research (and due diligence) for this Methods Document was an in-depth discussion with the researchers responsible for other policy databases, at EU, WHO and national level, from which learnings and comparisons could be drawn. A mix of international and national databases were selected for interview; some project leaders were already known to WCRF International, but others were not. In addition, WCRF International spoke with a leading expert on policy surveillance and healthy policy databases, for views on, for example, the global scan and on the comprehensive European scan (see also the [Technical Annex](#)).

Twelve interviews were conducted in October–December 2018 and a summary of each interview is provided in the [Technical Annex](#). In addition, a comparison table of the health policy databases (including their geography, the format of the information and number of entries) has been compiled (below).

- Scott Burris, Temple University, Philadelphia (policy surveillance)
- Melanie Cowan, WHO (NCD Document Repository)
- Kaitlin Donley, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (Tobacco Laws Legislation database)
- Kaia Engesveen, WHO (GINA database)
- Jack Fisher, WHO (Knowledge Action Portal)
- Michelle Halligan and Kendall Tisdale, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (Canadian Prevention Policies database)
- Maisha Hutton, Healthy Caribbean Coalition (Childhood Obesity Prevention Scorecard)
- Rachel Jackson Leach, World Obesity (Interactive Global Atlas)
- Sally Mancini, UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity (Rudd Center Legislation Database)
- Tracy Nau, Sydney University (ASAPa)
- Janice Osborn, Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CAB International databases)
- Giulia Paolini, European Commission (EU Youth Wiki)

It is indicative of the importance of this project that almost everyone to whom WCRF International reached out was both interested in the new NOURISHING/MOVING database and web platform and also, crucially, eager to help.

Many other policy databases were identified but were not contacted for further information. These are also listed in the [Technical Annex](#).

Database comparison table

For more information, see [Technical Annex](#).

Database and URL	Parent organisation(s)	Topic description	Geography	Approx # of database items (Nov 2018)	Info format (e.g. pdf/link/ description/ abstract)	Search functionality	Data automation?*
Childhood Obesity Prevention Scorecard	Healthy Caribbean Coalition	Scorecard to facilitate strengthened awareness of national policy responses to childhood obesity	Caribbean	224	Link to external government URL where possible	No word search functionality; search by country	X
EU Youth Wiki	European Commission (EACEA)	National policies on youth, including 'health and wellbeing'	Europe (34 countries)	Single entry on health/wellbeing per country	Description of national policy across specific health areas	No word search functionality	X
GINA	WHO	Information on the implementation of nutrition policies, mechanisms and interventions	Global	9,000 (of which ≈2,100 are policies)	Description, pdf of the policy, URL	Category filters and free word search	X
Healthy Food Policy database	CAFS, PHLC and the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity	Identifies local laws that seek to promote access to healthy food, and also contribute to strong local economies, an improved environment, and health equity	United States	260	Description of the policy and link to the legislation on Municode	Category filters and free word search of the summary	✓
Interactive Obesity Atlas	World Obesity Federation	Mapping of obesity statistics, actions (including policies and interventions), drivers and impacts	Global	800 policy/ intervention entries	Short description and external URL	Country or category search	X
Knowledge Action Portal	WHO	Community-driven platform for NCD information, interaction and inspiration	Global	700	Short description and link to pdf on external site	Category filters (inc region and language)	X

Database and URL	Parent organisation(s)	Topic description	Geography	Approx # of database items (Nov 2018)	Info format (e.g. pdf/link/ description/ abstract)	Search functionality	Data automation?*
NCD Document Repository	WHO	Documents containing NCD targets, policies, and guidelines submitted by Member States to WHO	Global	2,900	pdf stored within the Repository website	Category/ country search and (document titles only) keyword search	X
NOURISHING	World Cancer Research Fund International	Implemented government policy actions to promote healthy diets and reduce obesity	Global	515	Description of key attributes	Category and country search	X
Prevention Policies Directory	Canadian Partnership against Cancer	Healthy public policies focused on cancer and NCD prevention	Canada	2,100	Short description and link to CANLII legislation database	Category (location and risk factor) search, plus keyword search	✓
Rudd Center Legislation Database	UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity	Tracks state and federal policies related to obesity and diet-related diseases	United States	3,050	Short summary and pdf (from Westlaw)	Category, year and jurisdiction filters	✓
Tobacco Control Laws database	Tobacco Free Kids	Tobacco-control laws in three policy areas: smoke free / advertising, promotion and sponsorship / packaging and labelling	Global (206 countries) but primarily LMICs	1,980	pdf of the legislation (translated) and short summary	Free word search (and categorised by policy type)	X

* Indicates that policies/legislation are initially sourced using a) a webscraper or robot or b) using a third-party legislative search service (this information is then filtered in-house for inclusion in the databases).

Note that ASAPa (Australian Systems Approaches to Physical Activity) and CAB International (Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International) were interviewed but are not included here as ASAPa has not yet launched and CAB International is a broader database including abstracts etc.

