Nutrition policy status in Belgium

NOURISHING policy index

May 2023



This country snapshot presents detailed results of the **NOURISHING policy index** [1] for Belgium. It highlights strengths and weaknesses in the design of national government nutrition policies. This snapshot supplements the policy index results with an in-depth look at the quality of policy design in each country. Full policy index results are outlined in the NOURISHING policy brief, which compares Belgium to 29 other European countries.

Main messages

- 1 Belgium implements policy actions at national government level in nine out of the ten policy areas of the NOURISHING framework. Two policy areas received a good assessment: increasing public awareness of healthy eating through communication campaigns and social marketing based on food-based dietary guidelines (I2) and setting limits or removal of specific nutrients in food products (I1), followed by a moderate assessment for nutrition label standards and regulations (N1) and setting rules and incentives for creating a healthy retail and food service environment (S).
- 2 The national government has taken some action using supply chain incentives to ensure coherence of food systems with health. However, key gaps in this policy areas include lack of nutrition standards for food procurement (H). Action on food standards in schools (O), nutrition counselling in healthcare settings (N2), and nutrition education and skills (G) may be the remit of regional governments in Belgium, which are not addressed in this snapshot.
- **3** Greater action should be taken in using financial incentives which increase the availability and affordability of healthy food (U), to accompany an existing sugar tax (U). Further, more needs to done to strengthen regulations around food marketing and advertising to young people, with marketing through sponsorship, point of sales measures and in/around schools being among the gaps (R).

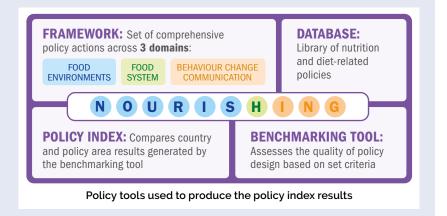
Overview of policy status	NO POLICIES IDENTIFIED	POOR	FAIR	MODERATE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Nutrition label standards and regulations on the use of claims and implied claims on food				MODERATE		
Offer healthy food and set standards in public institutions and other specific settings					FAIR	
Use economic tools to address food affordability and purchase incentives					FAIR	
Restrict food advertising and other forms of commercial promotion				POOR		
Improve nutritional quality of the whole food supply				GOOD		
S Set incentives and rules to create a healthy retail and food service environment				MODERATE		
Harness supply chain and actions across sectors to ensure coherence with health				POOR		
Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness			GOOD			
Nutrition advice and counselling in healthcare settings				NO POLICIES IDENTIFIED		
G Give nutrition education and skills				FAIR		

This snapshot is based on national level policies only. Policies issued by provincial, regional or local governments are outside the scope of this project.

Methods

The NOURISHING policy index methods are fully explained in the associated **policy brief**. In short, the policy index combines values for a) policy presence, and b) policy design for 41 benchmarks.

The benchmarks are applied to policies in the **NOURISHING database** [2], collected through a comprehensive scan in 30 European countries, including Belgium.



Breakdown of policy index results (For full details on the policy design criteria, consult the policy brief) No policy identified Meets up to 75% of policy design criteria Meets up to 25% of policy design criteria Meets up to 99% of policy design criteria Meets up to 50% of policy design criteria Meets all aspirational standards

	Nutrients on back of pack	
	Front of pack labels	
N	Warning labels	X
	Rules on nutrient claims	
	Rules on health claims	
	Food and drink available in schools, including restrictions on unhealthy foods	
	Measures relating to sugar-sweetened beverage provision in schools	×
0	Fruit and vegetables initiatives in schools	
	Food and drink available in immediate vicinity of schools	×
	Unhealthy food in out-of-education locations	×
U	Health-related food taxes or tariffs	
	Income related subsidies or initiatives to increase affordability and accessibility of healthy food	×
	Targeted subsidies or initiatives to increase affordability and accessibility of healthy food	×
R	Marketing to young people through advertising	
	Direct marketing to young people	
	Marketing through sponsorship to young people	×
	Marketing to young people through point of sale measures	×
	Marketing to young people through product placement and branding	×
	Marketing to young people through product design and packaging	×
	Marketing in/or around schools	X
	Limit or removal of specific nutrients in food products	

S	Planning restrictions regarding food service outlets around schools	
	Planning restrictions on food service outlets	×
	Initiatives to increase the availability of healthier food in stores and food service outlets	
H	Measures to support food producers to increase healthy food and decrease unhealthy food in the supply chain	×
	Measures to support food manufacturers to increase healthy food and decrease unhealthy food in the supply chain	×
	Measures to support food retailers to increase healthy food and decrease unhealthy food in the supply chain	×
	Governance structures for multi- sectoral/stakeholder engagement	
	Nutrition standards for public procurement	X
	Supporting urban agriculture in health and planning policies	×
	Community food production	X
	Development and communication of food-based dietary guidelines	
	Public awareness, mass media and informational campaigns and social marketing on healthy eating	
N	Nutrition advice and counselling in primary care	×
	Nutrition advice and counselling in school healthcare setting	×
G	Nutrition education in curricula	
	Training for educators	X
	Training for health professionals	×
	Cooking skills	X
	Training in schools in growing food	X
	Training for caterers	

Note: The policy landscape in any country evolves over time. These findings reflect our knowledge as of May 2023. To see latest results and for further technical information on the policy indexes, please consult our website: wcrf.org/our-policy-work.

For feedback or suggested updates, please email policy@wcrf.org. More info in the CO-CREATE project can be found at co-create.eu

[1] Policy index: wcrf.org/nutrition-policy-index

[2] Policy database: policydatabase.wcrf.org





This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 774210.

This document reflects only the authors' views and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

