

# 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 be 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

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

**FRAMEWORK:** Set of comprehensive policy actions across **3 domains**:

FOOD ENVIRONMENTS

FOOD SYSTEM

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION

**DATABASE:**

Library of nutrition and diet-related policies

**N O U R I S H I N G**

**POLICY INDEX:** Compares country and policy area results generated by the benchmarking tool

**BENCHMARKING TOOL:**

Assesses the quality of policy design based on set criteria

Policy tools used to produce the policy index results

## 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			Planning restrictions regarding food service outlets around schools		
	Front of pack labels			Planning restrictions on food service outlets		
	Warning labels			Initiatives to increase the availability of healthier food in stores and food service outlets		
	Rules on nutrient claims			Measures to support food producers to increase healthy food and decrease unhealthy food in the supply chain		
	Rules on health claims				Measures to support food manufacturers to increase healthy food and decrease unhealthy food in the supply chain	
	Food and drink available in schools, including restrictions on unhealthy foods				Measures to support food retailers to increase healthy food and decrease unhealthy food in the supply chain	
	Measures relating to sugar-sweetened beverage provision in schools				Governance structures for multi-sectoral/stakeholder engagement	
	Fruit and vegetables initiatives in schools			Nutrition standards for public procurement		
	Food and drink available in immediate vicinity of schools			Supporting urban agriculture in health and planning policies		
	Unhealthy food in out-of-education locations			Community food production		
	Health-related food taxes or tariffs			Development and communication of food-based dietary guidelines		
	Income related subsidies or initiatives to increase affordability and accessibility of healthy food			Public awareness, mass media and informational campaigns and social marketing on healthy eating		
	Targeted subsidies or initiatives to increase affordability and accessibility of healthy food			Nutrition advice and counselling in primary care		
	Marketing to young people through advertising			Nutrition advice and counselling in school healthcare setting		
	Direct marketing to young people		Nutrition education in curricula			
	Marketing through sponsorship to young people			Training for educators		
	Marketing to young people through point of sale measures			Training for health professionals		
	Marketing to young people through product placement and branding			Cooking skills		
	Marketing to young people through product design and packaging			Training in schools in growing food		
	Marketing in/or around schools			Training for caterers		
Limit or removal of specific nutrients in food products						

**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](https://wcrf.org/our-policy-work).

For feedback or suggested updates, please email [policy@wcrf.org](mailto:policy@wcrf.org). More info in the CO-CREATE project can be found at [co-create.eu](https://co-create.eu)

[1] Policy index: [wcrf.org/nutrition-policy-index](https://wcrf.org/nutrition-policy-index) [2] Policy database: [policydatabase.wcrf.org](https://policydatabase.wcrf.org)