

# Nutrition policy status in Portugal

NOURISHING policy index  
May 2023



This country snapshot presents detailed results of the **NOURISHING policy index** [1] for Portugal. 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 Portugal to 29 other European countries.

## Main messages

- 1 Portugal implements nutrition and diet-related policy actions in nine of the ten policy areas of the NOURISHING framework. Policy areas that received a good assessment referred to limits or removal of specific nutrients in food products (I1) and increasing public awareness of healthy eating through communication campaigns and social marketing (I2).
- 2 There is a lack of implementation on nutrition label standards and regulations (N1) beyond EU level policies. Food availability within the school vicinity was lacking, impacting otherwise well-designed standards on school food (O). Weaknesses were seen in regulations of the food environment surrounding schools (S) and in providing nutrition advice in school healthcare settings (N2).
- 3 Greater action is needed in increasing nutrition education and skills (G), where no policy was identified at national level. Even though Portugal implemented a sugar tax, greater action should be taken to improve financial incentives to increase affordability and accessibility of healthier food (U), marketing to young people especially in/around schools to reduce their exposure to food marketing and advertising (R), along with strengthening public food procurement policies by implementing further policy actions within this area (H).

## 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 | FAIR                   |
| <b>O</b> | Offer healthy food and set standards in public institutions and other specific settings   | MODERATE               |
| <b>U</b> | Use economic tools to address food affordability and purchase incentives                  | MODERATE               |
| <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          | FAIR                   |
| <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                                   | FAIR                   |
| <b>G</b> | Give nutrition education and skills   | NO POLICIES IDENTIFIED |

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 Portugal.

**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          |

|          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>N</b> | Nutrients on back of pack   |    | <b>S</b>  | 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  |    |   | <b>H</b>  | 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 |  |
| <b>O</b> | 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   |              |   |   |
| <b>U</b> | Health-related food taxes or tariffs  |    | <b>I</b>  | 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       |  | <b>N</b>  | Nutrition advice and counselling in primary care  |                            |   |
| <b>R</b> | Marketing to young people through advertising   |  |   | Nutrition advice and counselling in school healthcare setting                                   |                            |   |
|          | Direct marketing to young people  |  | <b>G</b>  | 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   |            |   |   |
| <b>I</b> | 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)