



News Release

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World Obesity Federation's latest policy dossier highlights front-of-pack labelling as an effective tool to promote healthy diets.

- Poor diet has been identified as one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity globally
- The World Health Organization identified front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPL) as “one of the policy tools that can support healthy diets, both in stimulating consumers to make informed healthier food choices and in driving manufacturers to reformulate products to avoid making unfavourable nutrient content disclosure.”[1]

According to a new evidence dossier published by the World Obesity Federation, front-of-pack labelling (FOPL) is an effective policy tool to help support consumers in making informed food choices as part of a package of policies.

Produced with the support of an operating grant under the European Commission's 3rd Health Programme (2014-2020), this latest dossier collates systematic reviews, cost studies, case studies and other resources and reports previously published on FOPL in order to support the development and implementation of FOPL. The dossier is supplemented with a policy briefing as well as a webinar hosted by World Obesity.

Across Europe, the implementation of FOPL is currently voluntary, leading to a lack of harmonisation both in the format and implementation of schemes within countries and across the region. The lack of standardisation also results in reduced usage and selective placement of the label on specific products.

Despite some challenges, there is growing momentum from countries across the European Union to adopt FOPL policies to safeguard the health of their populations. Today, 16 countries across the region have a government-endorsed FOPL scheme. The industries' willingness to adopt these policies is also reflected through widespread implementation as well as noticeable health benefits. By September 2019, 8,214 companies in France had Nutri-Score featured on their packaging.[2] Impressively, in the United Kingdom, the introduction of the multiple traffic light system in 2013 seems to have led soft drink companies to reduce sugar from their products by 19%.[3]

Hannah Brinsden, Deputy Director of Policy at the World Obesity Federation, “Front of pack labelling is one important component of the package of nutrition policies that are needed to help prevent obesity. Although we are seeing a number of governments supporting front-of-pack labelling, we urgently need greater harmonisation and stricter implementation of these schemes in order to have the biggest impact. This will require strong government leadership and coordination.”

The evidence dossier collates research from a range of sources to identify important considerations when trying to develop and implement FOPL policies. Using the evidence available and a series of case studies,

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the World Obesity Federation made a series of recommendations for policy makers and civil society organisations across the European Union to consider, including the need to:

- **Consider the local context:** Consider the legal framework under which FOPL would be introduced to account for potential interferences with other legislations and existing nutrition policies.
- **Adopt standardised FOPL:** A single system should be developed at a national level to increase national harmonisation, improve the impact of the FOPL system and avoid confusion.
- **Involve different stakeholders, but safeguard processes from conflicts of interest:** Different stakeholders can bring useful expertise and insight to the policy development process on issues such as the type of FOPL to be used, which products it should be applied to as well as to what nutrient thresholds should be used.
- **Dissemination and education:** Adopt appropriate communication strategies and educational campaigns to improve the awareness and understanding of the selected FOPL schemes.
- **Use FOPL as part of a comprehensive policy portfolio:** Policies should be developed in parallel to the implementation of other relevant nutrition policies to have the biggest impact on diet.

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The policy briefing is available for download at <https://www.worldobesity.org/resources/policy-dossiers/pd-7/pd-7-wof-introduction>

The dossier of evidence is accessible at <https://www.worldobesity.org/resources/policy-dossiers/pd-7>

References

[1] B. Kelly and J. Jewell, "What is the evidence on the policy specifications, development processes and effectiveness of existing front-of-pack food labelling policies in the WHO European Region?"

[2] M. Bio and C. Christ, "Entreprises et marques utilisant le Nutri-Score en France," 2019.

[3] FDF Food & Drink Federation, "Feeding Change Report," 2018.