

# RATING WORKSHOP METHODS

## Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) for England

26<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Westminster University

### Introduction

#### Background

In the United Kingdom (UK) two thirds of adults and up to 40% of children aged 11 to 18 years are either overweight or obese (NatCen & UCL, 2013). Health problems associated with being overweight or obese cost the NHS more than £5 billion every year (UK Gov, 2015). Effective government policies and actions are essential to increase the healthiness of food environments and to reduce these high levels of obesity and their related costs.

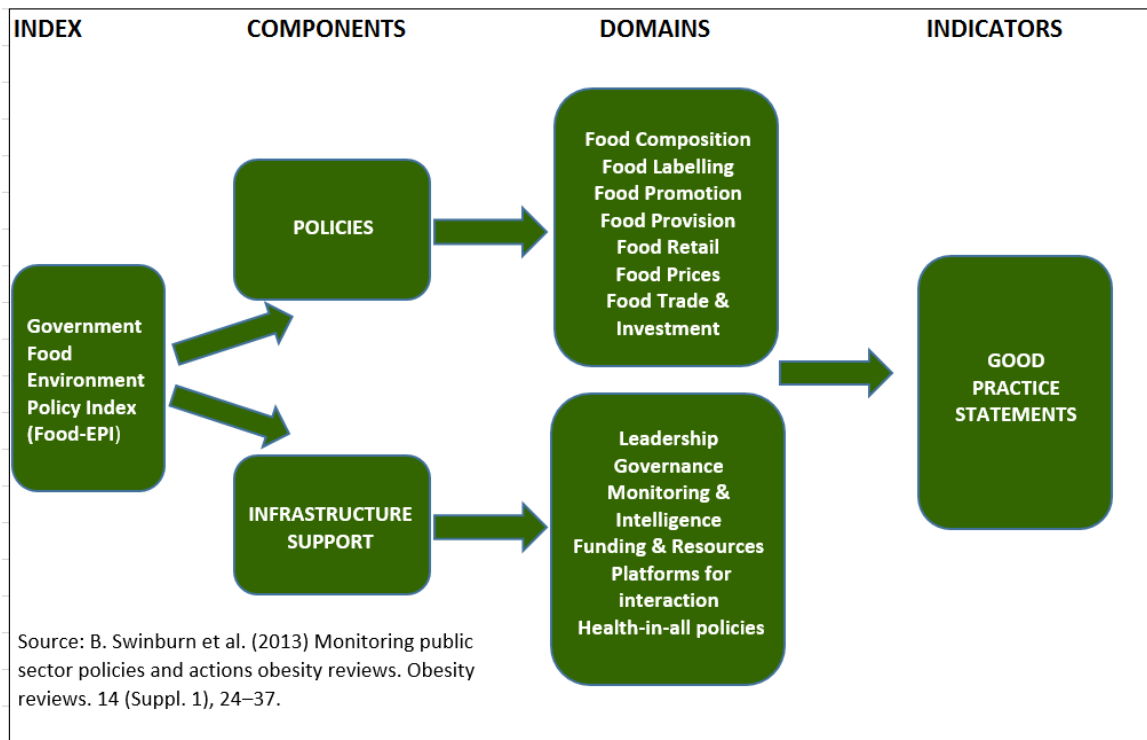
The Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) assesses the degree to which governments have implemented policies and infrastructure support in order to improve food environments, and the implementation of obesity and non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention policies and actions. The Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) is one tool that can be used to:

- (1) Identify and prioritise actions needed to address critical gaps in government policies and infrastructure support;
- (2) Allow comparison of one country's progress with international examples of progress;
- (3) Track progress of improvements in the food environment.

The Food EPI conceptual framework and approach has been developed by INFORMAS (an international network for food and obesity research) (INFORMAS Benchmarking Food Environments, 2015). Food EPI has been completed in New Zealand (Vandevijvere & Swinburn, 2015) and is being carried out in several other countries. A Steering Group with 8 members is overseeing the application of the Food EPI process in England. Members are from the Food Foundation, World Obesity Federation, UK Health Forum, Centre for Food Policy (City University).

As illustrated in Figure 1, different aspects of the food environment - which can be influenced by governments to create readily accessible, available and affordable healthier food choices - are represented within the Food EPI as domains. There are seven domains under the policy component and six domains under the infrastructure support component. A set of good practice statements, that describe the measures that governments put in place to help create healthier food environment, have been developed by INFORMAS for each domain. There are 48 good practice statements in total.

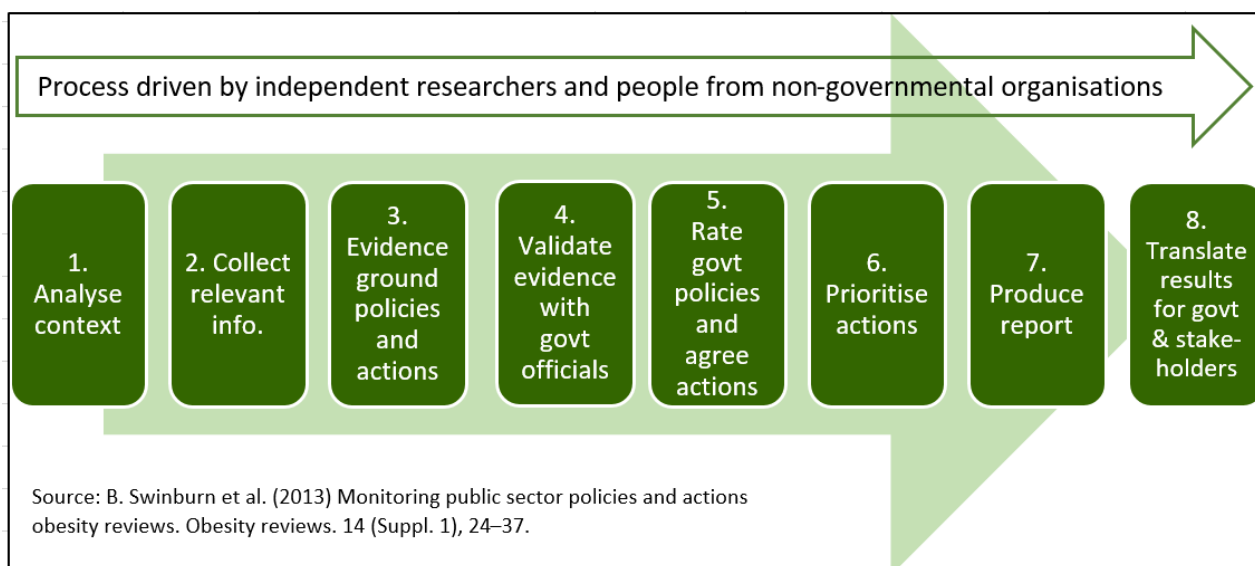
**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Food EPI**



There are eight steps involved in developing a Food EPI for a particular country (see Figure 2). The Food Foundation has completed the first four steps, having compiled an Evidence Paper for England which has been validated by government officials.

The subsequent step is to convene an expert panel of academics and civil society organisations to rate government policies against the good practice statements, and identify and prioritise what policy actions should be adopted by government to address implementation gaps.

**Figure 2: Process for assessing the policies and actions of governments to create food environments**



## Methods for Rating Workshop (Step 5)

### Study Design

The rating of government policies and actions in England will be carried out by an Expert Panel through two separate processes. First, government policies and infrastructure support will be rated in an all day workshop, and a set of actions to address critical gaps agreed. Second, the agreed actions will be further prioritised through a subsequent E mail consultation. The methods for the rating workshop (step 5) are described below.

### Rating Workshop

The rating workshop will take place on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm in [The Pavilion Room](#) of the University of Westminster.

### Participants

Approximately 100 individuals from academia and civil society were invited to join the Expert Panel by the Steering Group. The criteria used to select the Expert Panel were: (1) individuals with expertise in one or more domain areas; (2) individuals from organisations independent of the Government.

In addition, a number of government observers and civil society representatives from NGOs in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were invited to the workshop. The final list was compiled and agreed by the Steering Group.

### Approach

The rating workshop will be divided into two sections (see Table 1 below). In the morning, the Expert Panel (including non-government representatives operating within the devolved nations) will rate government policies and infrastructure support. The afternoon will be devoted to discussion of actions needed to address critical implementation gaps identified through the rating process. The morning will start with a presentation of the background to Food EPI, the objectives of the rating workshop and the methods being adopted.

**Table 1: Workshop agenda**

Time	Session	Chair/Presenter
08:30	Tea and coffee on arrival	
09:00	Welcome, objectives of meeting.	Lord Krebs (Chair)
	Background to Food EPI.	Food Foundation

<b>09:30</b>	Interactive session - rating of England policy domains	Steering Group
<b>11:15</b>	<b>Break, with tea and coffee</b>	
<b>11:30</b>	Interactive session - rating of England infrastructure support	Steering Group
<b>13:00</b>	<b>Lunch - catering provided</b>	
<b>14:00</b>	Identifying implementation gaps	Lord Krebs
	Interactive session - identifying and prioritising Government actions (working groups followed by plenary)	
<b>16:00</b>	<b>Break, with tea and coffee</b>	
<b>16:30</b>	Reflections from Government observers	Lord Krebs
	Next steps for Food EPI - in England and devolved nations	
	Reflections from Chair	
<b>17:00</b>	<b>END</b>	

## Tools

Participants involved in the rating will be provided with hand-held electronic rating devices. The devices enable an immediate representation of the ratings to be visually presented on screen.

## Rating of government policies and infrastructure

A rating is required for each of the 48 good practice statements. In advance of the rating, two presentation slides will be shown for each good practice statement: the first presents evidence of any measures taken by the government in England which represent a (partial/full) implementation of the good practice statement; the second slide presents examples from other countries of measures taken by governments that partially or fully equate to the good practice statement.

Participants will then be asked to rate the current degree of implementation of policies and infrastructure support in England, on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=less than 20% implementation, 2=20-40% implementation, 3=40-60% implementation, 4=60-80% implementation, 5=80-100% implementation). Raters will be asked to consider the previously presented evidence, and their own informed judgement, when rating. An option of 'cannot rate'= 6 is included for those who feel they lack sufficient evidence to come to a decision.

Raters rate policies and infrastructure support in two ways: firstly, against international examples (How well is England doing compared to other countries?). This will be recorded on paper form only. Secondly, against the 'gold standard' as set out in the good practice statement (Is England doing as well as it should?). Each rater will record their ratings on a paper form and on the hand-held device.

## Agreeing a set of actions to address critical gaps

Following the lunch break, the Food Foundation team will briefly present a summary of all ratings, highlighting apparent implementation gaps. This will serve as an introduction to the afternoon session, which will consist of an interactive workshop where raters will design and prioritise policy actions to be recommended to government.

Action statements will have been drafted in advance of the workshop which contain suggestions for how governments could reach each of the good practice statements. The proposed actions will be based on existing recommendations for action from the Obesity Health Alliance, Jamie Oliver Foundation, Fabian Society and PHE. The Chair will lead a breakout session where each table will:

- 1) Prioritise all action statements within two or more domains, according to their utility in addressing the implementation gaps identified through the morning sessions, and whether any political windows allow for an easy adoption from government.
- 2) Debate the concise wording for each action statement within two or more domains.

The breakout groups will report back to the room.

### Next steps

The day will end with plenary discussion. This will include:

- (a) Feedback from Government observers and devolved nation participants on the usefulness of the Food EPI process and whether the process would be helpful to repeat the other nations.
- (b) Finishing the exercise through E-mail consultation (equivalent to Step 6) in which the actions proposed at the workshop will be prioritised by all members of an Expert Group (those who attended the workshop and those who did not).
- (c) Publishing the results as a report and possibly academic paper.
- (d) Initial plans for feedback to Government.

### References

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