



European Salt Action Network - ESAN

Terms of Reference

Synopsis

People in the WHO European Region eat too much salt. It is estimated that more than two thirds of salt consumed is from processed foods. Reducing salt intake by half would lead to a dramatic drop in coronary heart disease. In many countries in the WHO European Region, more than two thirds of all salt consumed is hidden in processed foods and snacks or food products. In addition restaurants are key suppliers of foods high in salt as well as fats and sugars. This means that only approximately 20% of salt intake is under the control of the consumer: many people are unaware of how much salt they are consuming, and are not able to cut their salt intake.

Salt reduction plays a very important role in supporting the achievement of the reduction of non communicable diseases in the European population. WHO/Europe has listed salt reduction as one of the priority interventions in the most recent Action Plan for the implementation of the European Strategy on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (2012-2016).

In recent years there have been numerous successful strategies and salt reduction programmes initiated in the WHO European Region supported by the WHO European Salt Action Network (ESAN). However, there is still much progress to be made in terms of public awareness, behavioural change, and reducing salt in processed foods.

Goals

In line with the Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Strategy to prevent and control NCDs several Member States within the WHO European Region the Meeting of the European Salt Action Network will:

- a) promote the identification and sharing of national policies on salt reduction and the types of action undertaken;
- b) describe monitoring and evaluation strategies of salt reduction initiatives;
- c) discuss the public health and cost benefits of salt reduction strategies in different countries;
- d) develop “good practices” in the area of policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- e) promote the development of science and food technology in the relevant areas;
- f) explore the links between salt reduction policies and inequalities.

Organisation

Interested Member States within the WHO European Region will meet once per year (annual general meeting), usually in spring. The meeting is organised and hosted by the ESAN leading country in close collaboration with WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Meeting documents (e.g. presentations, list of participants) are accessible to network members on a protected domain.

Working groups on specific topics may be installed. The working groups report back on a regular base on their progress during the annual general meeting. Working group meetings are organised and hosted by the leading country of the working group.

Participants

Countries in the WHO European Region can participate in the WHO European Salt Action Network (ESAN).

Participants in the network work in governmental institutions i.e. Ministry of Health, Public Health Institute, Health Directorate, or have been nominated by the government.

Coordinator

João Breda – WHO Regional Office for Europe – Copenhagen

ESAN leading country

Switzerland, Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office