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RESEARCH TENDER CALL



TENDER INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Project Reference No.: 03-2020

Project Title:

“Review of international practice on building ‘sustainability’ into national healthy eating guidelines and practical implications for policy”

1. Objective/Knowledge Gap:

The overall aim is to identify best practice approaches to building sustainability in healthy eating guidelines and to consider the practical implications for policy.

Objectives:

- Identify the evidence of approaches to integrating sustainability into national healthy eating food-based dietary guidelines
- To explore current beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours of a representative sample of adults on the island of Ireland (IOI) to sustainable healthy diets
- To identify best practice approaches with most practical relevance, taking public attitudes into consideration, for incorporation of sustainability in food based dietary guidelines on the IOI

2. Background

Sustainability in food policy and dietary guidelines is increasingly a focus of researchers, international organizations, and governments. The WHO/FAO have recently proposed a number of guiding principles for sustainable and healthy diets. These principles are set out against a backdrop where

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- poor diets are a major contributory factor to the rising prevalence of malnutrition in all its forms
- unhealthy diets and malnutrition are among the top ten risk factors contributing to the global burden of disease
- the way that food is produced and consumed is taking a toll on the environment e.g. food production accounts for the use of 48% and 70% of land and fresh water resources respectively at global level and where social, demographic and economic factors are also contributing to changing lifestyles and eating patterns, and subsequently putting pressure on resources for food production
- there is an urgent need to promote diets that are healthy, have a low environmental impact and are also socio-culturally acceptable and economically accessible for all (1).

One important step to bringing national health and environmental goals in line to support a more sustainable and healthy future is to develop and disseminate food-based dietary guidelines. These can support the practical implementation of policies in different sectors of society (health, education, community, etc.) to foster such patterns. Suggested ways forward include having clear links to food policies that are actually implemented as well as considering current consumption patterns and have clear guidance on limiting meat consumption, environmental benefits of limiting overconsumption, food waste reduction, which fruits and vegetables to seek out, safe and efficient food preparation, shopping, the place and value of food in our lives and providing guidance for those who wish to adopt vegetarian diets (2). Further research is needed in the areas of sustainable fish production, a sustainable level of meat consumption, the impact of dairy products in relation to health and sustainability and better understanding of the environmental impacts of high sugar, high fat, and high salt and processed foods (2).

Public Health England have taken an important first step in including limited sustainability messaging in the updated Eatwell Guide, but there is still some way to go to embed this within dietary guidelines and have a real effect on food consumption (3). The Carbon Trust sustainability assessment indicated that the Eatwell Guide shows an appreciably lower environmental impact than the current UK diet (4).

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3. Approach

The proposal will involve a review of the evidence on approaches to integrating sustainability into national healthy eating food based dietary guidelines. The evidence in relation to best practice approaches with most practical relevance for incorporation of sustainability into food based dietary guidelines on the IOI should be presented. A qualitative approach can be used to supplement the quantitative approach. If a mixed methods approach is used, then it is expected that the research will intentionally integrate or combine these methods to draw on the strengths of each e.g. allow one method to inform the other and allow one method to provide deeper insights into the findings of another.

4. Technical Specification

- (a) Scope of research
- (b) Literature review
- (c) Qualitative and quantitative work
- (d) Analysis
- (e) Data handling and Reporting
- (f) Quality assurance

(a) Scope of the research

The literature should look at the most recent international evidence on approaches to integrating sustainability into national healthy eating food-based dietary guidelines and focus on those with most practical relevance on the IOI. The research should take into account that sustainability messages were considered in the UK guidelines but there is limited specificity around quantified amounts, as well as social and cultural factors.

The investigation of beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours should:

- Target adults
- Investigate beliefs, attitudes and knowledge, and behaviour around sustainable healthy diets.
- Include consideration of sustainable healthy diets in both adult diets and children/ teenagers in their care

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- Sample must be representative of population in terms of social class, age, region and rural / urban
- The sample should be of sufficient size to represent each jurisdiction (NI and ROI respectively) as well as on the IOI basis. The purpose of the research is not to determine differences between jurisdictions but rather to provide regional data.

(b) Literature review

It should include peer reviewed publications and a full search of the grey literature including government and other organization reports, and conference proceeding etc.

(c) Qualitative and quantitative research

A full justification and rationale for the proposed methodology (including recruitment strategies) and analytical approach will be required. It will be necessary to indicate for all aspects of the project how the proposed data will be collected, analysed and reported.

The use of validated questionnaires should be considered to collect relevant data.

If qualitative data is used, the contractor is responsible for developing and piloting any topic guide which will be used to facilitate qualitative discussions. The contractor is encouraged to use tools such as vignettes or visual aids to facilitate a more relevant and open discussion for the participants.

(d) Analysis

The contractor will provide explicit details of all analytical methods. Quality control must be evident and in the case of the qualitative research the results must be verified by a second qualitative researcher. Where a mixed methods approach is used, triangulation of results must be undertaken.

(e) Data Handling and reporting

- The contractor will submit to **safefood**, on a six monthly basis, a summary interim report (electronic and hard copy) containing details of the progress for each deliverable of the project.
- The contractor is responsible for collating all results and a final report will be submitted to **safefood** on completion of the study.

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- All forms, documentation and electronic files must be retained by the contractor until further notice for **safefood** in case of issues arising after the completion of the research.

(f) Quality Assurance

- Ethical approval will be an essential component to the approach where human interventions are involved.
- To ensure transparency and reproducibility, all data sources used in the research must be specified, and all data used must be explicitly specified and justified.
- **safefood** may visit the contractors during the course of the research to assess how the work is being carried out.

5. Proposed Activities/Deliverables

- The proposed activities and deliverables will be dependent on the methodology proposed and will include:
 - a literature review of the evidence of approaches to integrating sustainability into national health eating food based dietary guidelines,
 - a report on the current beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours of adults on the IOI in relation to sustainable healthy diets,
 - a discussion of best practice approaches with most practical relevance for further incorporation of sustainability into food based dietary guidelines on the IOI.
- Submission on a 6 monthly basis of an interim report.
- Submission of a final report to be submitted to **safefood** at the end of the 12 month study period.
- Detailed recommendations of potential strategies to enable **safefood** to provide guidance to policy makers and consumers on building 'sustainability' into national healthy eating guidelines.

6. Other requirements

Total costings are to be included in the tender.

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7. Evaluation of Tenders

Tender bids will be evaluated according to the quality of proposals and applicants using the following criteria:

Quality of the proposal:

- ✓ Anticipated deliverables;
- ✓ Research method and facilities;
- ✓ Value for money;
- ✓ Potential for application;
- ✓ Work plan, including the overall timeframe.

Quality of Applicants:

- ✓ Experience in subject area;
- ✓ Quality Assurance and Quality Control measures in place.

8. Duration of Project

Estimated duration of the project: Total of 12 months max. A detailed timescale of research should be submitted by each applicant.

9. Tender Application Forms and Guidelines

The Tender Application Form and associated Guidelines can be downloaded from www.safefood.eu. They can also be obtained by emailing research@safefood.eu, quoting the project reference number **03-2020**. Alternatively please contact **safefood** as per the details below.

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The closing date for receipt of applications by **safefood** is no later than **4pm on Thursday 9th April 2020.**

References

1. FAO and WHO. Sustainable Healthy Diets, Guiding Principles. Rome; 2019.
2. FAO and FCRN. Plates, pyramids, planet. Developments in national healthy and sustainable dietary guidelines: a state of play assessment. 2016.
3. Public Health England. The eatwell guide: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland,; 2016 [Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>].
4. Carbon Trust. The Eatwell Guide: a More Sustainable Diet. Understanding the environmental impact of Public Health England's updated Eatwell Guide nutritional guidance 2016 [Available from: <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/reports/advice/sustainable-diets/>].