



Prevention of Obesity in Europe – Consortium for the prevention of obesity through effective nutrition and physical activity actions – EURO-PREVOB

Tackling the social and economic determinants of nutrition and physical activity for the prevention of obesity across Europe

PERIODIC ACTIVITY REPORT

Activity Period: 01/01/2007–30/06/2008

Publishable Executive Summary

EURO-PREVOB

Publishable Executive Summary

EURO-PREVOB objectives

Although the health of Europe's citizens has improved markedly in recent decades, the gains have not been equally distributed, and this is especially apparent for obesity. Inequalities in obesity have arisen and persist due to constraints imposed by low income and poor educational achievement on food choices, opportunities for recreational exercise, and differential absorption of health promotion messages. International and national actors have emphasised the need to reduce the health burden attributable to obesity in Europe as well as inequalities in obesity, with a substantial research effort being directed to improve understanding of the determinants of obesity and the effectiveness of interventions to tackle it. However, there is less than optimal information sharing between Member States and inadequate integration of current scientific knowledge into health protection policies, so that action on nutrition and physical activity fails to tackle obesity and inequalities in obesity. EURO-PREVOB is a coordination action project that seeks to address this shortcoming by integrating, at a European level, resources and expertise within and beyond the area of public health nutrition and physical activity to tackle the high level and variation in rates of obesity.

The EURO-PREVOB's three-year programme of work has been developed around **five key objectives**, namely to **(1)** improve the understanding of determinants of obesity and inequalities in obesity in Europe; **(2)** review the existing public health policy environment with regards to nutrition, physical activity, obesity and inequalities in obesity in Europe; **(3)** develop and pilot suitable, flexible tools that will enable public health researchers and decision-makers to assess the potential impacts of proposed policies on obesity and its determinants in Europe using a common methodology; **(4)** formulate a strategy for policy development and assessment relevant to planned and ongoing policies in Europe with regards to determinants of obesity and inequalities in obesity; and **(5)** promote and support networking and coordination of research and innovation activities related to scientific knowledge and policy development in the determinants of obesity and inequalities in obesity in Europe. Project findings should inform public health strategies for obesity prevention in Europe, promote broad dissemination and streamlining of actions against obesity in Europe; and inform further research proposals to build on the work carried out in EURO-PREVOB and implement the tools developed across a broader spectrum of countries.

Contractors involved and coordinator contact details

The project is coordinated by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM, UK). It involves 13 participants from 10 European countries (see table below). During the first reporting period, the project lost one Partner (P11 - National Centre for Preventive Medicine (NCPM), Russian Federation); this change was accompanied by the removal of the workpackage for which NCPM was responsible (WP7) in the Description of Work (DoW).

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| Number | Consortium participant name | Short name | Country |
|--------|--|------------|---------|
| P1 | London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine | LSHTM | UK |

| Number | Consortium participant name | Short name | Country |
|--------|--|------------|----------------------|
| P2 | SUHR'S Seminarium | SUHRS | Denmark |
| P3 | World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe | WHO | Denmark |
| P4 | Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale | INSERM | France |
| P5 | Hacettepe University Department of Nutrition and Dietetics | HUBDB | Turkey |
| P6 | South East Public Health Observatory | SEPHO | UK |
| P7 | Istituto Nazionale di Ricerca per gli Alimenti e la Nutrizione | INRAN | Italy |
| P8 | Health Promotion State Agency | HPSA | Latvia |
| P9 | Mazaryk University | MU | Czech Republic |
| P10 | Institute of Public Health of the Fed. of Bosnia & Herzegovina | IPH-FBIH | Bosnia & Herzegovina |
| P12 | Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia | IVZ | Slovenia |
| P13 | Geneva Infant Feeding Association | GIFA | Switzerland |
| P14 | University College London | UCL | UK |

Work performed, results achieved so far, and expected results

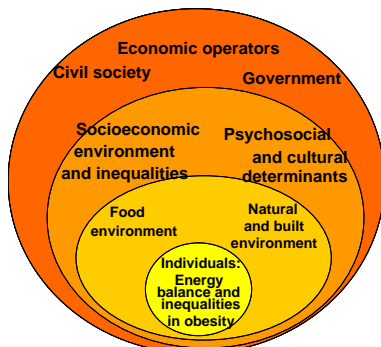
At the 18-month stage (30 June 2008), and after 15 months of work, the EURO-PREVOB project is progressing well, following closely the schedule set out in the DoW. Ten workpackages related to coordination activities have started during the first reporting period; two of these have been completed successfully and two will end shortly. A number of key Milestones have been reached and important Deliverables completed. These are described below.

Deliverable 1 – Report on the project launch. This deliverable reported on the project launch and was associated with Workpackage 1 (WP1 – ‘Project launch’). The launch was successfully carried out in London on 25 April 2007. This was the first occasion for all partners to meet and to discuss the project structure, responsibilities, reporting lines, and workplan. A project logo (*see illustration, right*) and a project website (www.europrevob.eu) were also discussed and agreed. The project website was launched in September 2007, and is regularly updated to provide information about project partners, activities, latest news and events, contact details, and outputs. The website also has an area with restricted access to project partners only to facilitate internal dissemination.



Deliverable 2 – Database of experts/stakeholders. Two databases were developed as part of WP2: The Database of European experts on the broad determinants of obesity provides the EURO-PREVOB with a pool of experts that agreed to be consulted during the course of the project to provide information, review EURO-PREVOB outputs and consensus documents, assess policy options, or contribute to the dissemination of the projects outputs. The Database of stakeholders that may be affected by or that can influence policies related to obesity in Europe will be used to map stakeholders in obesity prevention in different European sub-regions; the aim will be to involve various stakeholders at different steps of the project and to increase policy relevance.

Other milestones



Workpackage 3 – Reviews of literature. Two reviews of the literature were prepared in the first year of the project’s life within WP3 to shed light on the scientific and policy evidence required for the development of the next phases of the project: the first review (D3.1) summarises scientific knowledge on obesity

prevalence, health and economic burden of obesity, socioeconomic inequalities in obesity in Europe and determinants of obesity and inequalities in obesity. The second review (D3.2) discusses the existing public health policy situation with regard to nutrition and physical activity as determinants of obesity and inequalities in obesity in Europe. Alongside WP3, a conceptual model for the project was also developed (see model, on the left) to guide the work of EURO-PREVOB, to provide a logical framework for assessing key policy areas to be examined in the project, and specifically to help develop the policy analysis tool described below. Deliverables 3.1 and 3.2 will be submitted by 15 July 2008.

Workpackage 4 – Development of policy analysis tools and meetings to discuss them. A key step in the EURO-PREVOB project consists in developing a policy analysis tool that could enable public health researchers and decision-makers throughout Europe to assess the potential impacts of proposed policies on dietary intake, physical activity level and obesity using a common methodology. As part of WP4, the EURO-PREVOB policy analysis tool (D4.1) was developed; it is currently being finalised and will be submitted to the European Commission (EC) by 15 July 2008. The tool consists of: 1) a *policy checklist* to be completed through desk research and aiming to assess progress on key policy areas related to obesity; and 2) a *community questionnaire* entailing direct observations made in the community in relation to the food and built environments. The tool is accompanied by a concept paper on policy analysis which proposes a framework for policy analysis in the context of EURO-PREVOB, methods for policy analysis, and the principles guiding the development of the policy analysis tool.

The tool will be piloted in five sub-regions of Europe (see below) and will later be refined based on the results of the pilots. It will then be made available on the project website and will constitute a **main EURO-PREVOB end result**.

As part of WP4, the 1st EURO-PREVOB Plenary Meeting brought together researchers, policy-makers and other stakeholders on 17–18 April 2008, in Jurmala, Latvia. The meeting was used to obtain feedback on the policy evidence gathered in D3.1 and D3.2 and on the developed EURO-PREVOB policy analysis tool (D4.1). **D4.2** reports on the meeting discussions and summarise the advice gathered for the improvement of the policy analysis tool; this deliverable is currently being finalised and will be submitted to the EC by 15 July 2008. The recommendations made by meeting participants were critical to the revision and finalisation of the tool.

Workpackage 5 - Development and coordination of sub-regional analyses. As part of WP5, a common methodology for the pilot testing of the EURO-PREVOB policy analysis tool in five sub-regions of Europe has been drafted. This document provides detailed guidance to ensure that the five pilot tests will be conducted in a standardised fashion and that the lessons learnt can be documented. The logistics associated with pilot work will be discussed at the meeting of pilot test leaders (WP6, WP8-11) due to take place in Ljubljana in September 2008. The coordination of the pilots will then start and will continue until the end of pilot testing. D5 will report on the development and coordination activities of the pilot testing. It will be finalised in February 2009.

Workpackages 6 and 8-11 - Pilot work and sub-regional analyses in Central and Eastern Europe (WP5), in Nordic-Baltic countries (WP8), Southern Europe (WP9), South-Eastern Europe (WP10) and Western Europe (WP11). These workpackages relate to the pilot testing of the EURO-PREVOB policy analysis tool in five European sub-regions and include the organisation of sub-regional meetings of experts and stakeholders to discuss the relevance and applicability of the tool. Pilot testing will start in September 2008 in the five selected countries

(Czech Republic, Latvia, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and France). Reports discussing the results of the pilots will be prepared (**D6, D8, D9, D10, and D11**) and finalised in February 2009.

Workpackage 12 – Comparative analysis of regional consultations. A comparative analysis (D12) will be performed in the second reporting period by collating and summarising the outputs from the pilots and by identifying the critical policy areas and potentials for policy improvement. The 2nd EURO-PREVOB Plenary Meeting will be held in Turkey in May 2009 to discuss with experts and stakeholders the results of this analysis and recommendations for new policy options.

Workpackage 13 – Adaptation of European policy recommendations on nutrition and physical activity to take into account socio-economic inequalities. In the last year of the project's life, a policy document will then be prepared to reconsider current global and regional strategies addressing diet, physical activity and obesity in Europe. This work will be discussed at the 3rd Plenary Meeting to be held in October 2009. A finalised policy recommendation document (**D13**) will be submitted to the Commission and will constitute a **major project end result**.

Intention for use and impact

The EURO-PREVOB project is expected to have a considerable impact on information bases, policy-making and intersectoral collaboration in relation to nutrition and physical activity in the context of obesity and inequalities in obesity in an expanding Europe. The joint coordination and collaboration between the different project partners will help engender a united vision and approach to stemming the growth of obesity, and foster the exchange of best practices. EURO-PREVOB is expected to generate innovative solutions to obesity in the Region and contribute to making this a continuing reality through its developed policy analysis tool which will be made available to all on the project website at the end of the project. The tool will help policy-makers, public health researchers and stakeholders examine the policy situation in their country or region within a systematic logical framework in order to be able to reach the most appropriate recommendations for obesity prevention.

Main elements of the publishable results of the EURO-PREVOB

The task of dissemination has progressed in a highly satisfactory manner. The main elements of the publishable results arising from the dissemination plan (see Appendix 1) are as follows:

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| The EURO-PREVOB project was launched as planned in April 2007; |
| The EURO-PREVOB website (www.euoprevob.eu) was launched in September 2007. Links to the website have been included on the website of other organisations involved in obesity; |
| Two project fact sheets were developed. One was posted on the Scientific Support to Policies (SSP) website. The other was distributed to regional networks and experts and posted on the project website; |
| Four quarterly project newsletters have been prepared, distributed, and posted publicly on the project website; |
| Five posters describing the project and its methods have been presented at international conferences; |
| Articles for publication in peer-reviewed journals are being drafted based on the finalised deliverables to date. |