



# Level of implementation of best practice policies for creating healthy food environments: assessment by state and non-state actors in Thailand

Sirinya Phulkerd<sup>1,2,\*</sup>, Stefanie Vandevijvere<sup>3</sup>, Mark Lawrence<sup>4</sup>, Viroj Tangcharoensathien<sup>2</sup> and Gary Sacks<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood, VIC 3125, Australia: <sup>2</sup>International Health Policy Program, Ministry of Public Health, Nonthaburi, Thailand: <sup>3</sup>Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Population Health, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand: <sup>4</sup>Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University, Burwood, Victoria, Australia: <sup>5</sup>WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention, Deakin University, Burwood, Victoria, Australia

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To determine and compare the level of implementation of policies for healthy food environments in Thailand with reference to international best practice by state and non-state actors.

**Design:** Data on the current level of implementation of food environment policies were assessed independently using the adapted Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) by two groups of actors. Concrete actions were proposed for Thai Government. A joint meeting between both groups was subsequently held to reach consensus on priority actions.

**Setting:** Thailand.

**Subjects:** Thirty state actors and twenty-seven non-state actors.

**Results:** Level of policy implementation varied across different domains and actor groups. State actors rated implementation levels higher than non-state actors. Both state and non-state actors rated level of implementation of monitoring of BMI highest. Level of implementation of policies promoting in-store availability of healthy foods and policies increasing tax on unhealthy foods were rated lowest by state and non-state actors, respectively. Both groups reached consensus on eleven priority actions for implementation, focusing on food provision in public-sector settings, food composition, food promotion, leadership, monitoring and intelligence, and food trade.

**Conclusions:** Although the implementation gaps identified and priority actions proposed varied between state and non-state actors, both groups achieved consensus on a comprehensive food policy package to be implemented by the Thai Government to improve the healthiness of food environments. This consensus is a platform for continued policy dialogue towards cross-sectoral policy coherence and effective actions to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and obesity in Thailand.

## Keywords

Healthy food environments  
Policy implementation  
Obesity  
Non-communicable diseases  
State and non-state actors

The WHO recommendations for the control and prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCD) include establishing and strengthening country-level surveillance and monitoring as a top priority<sup>(1)</sup>. In recent years there have been increasing attempts to monitor and evaluate government policy responses to address obesity and NCD.

Often, such monitoring has been performed by WHO or global non-governmental organizations (NGO) such as the World Cancer Research Fund and World Obesity, rather

than country governments. The WHO's monitoring system specifically focuses on health outcomes, NCD risk factors and national system responses, but includes aspects of food environments, which are significant contributors to obesity and diet-related NCD, in only a limited way<sup>(2-4)</sup>. The WHO monitoring system includes two indicators on food environment policies: one on reduction of food marketing to children and one on limiting saturated and trans-fats in the food supply<sup>(5)</sup>.

\*Corresponding author: Email sphulker@deakin.edu.au