FOOD CONSUMPTION DATA NETWORK
Minutes of the 17th meeting

18-19 June 2025
09:30-18:00 / 09:00-18:00
Minutes agreed on 10 July 2025

Location: EFSA - Parma (Board Room)/Webconference

Attendees:

- Network Participants:

Country	Member State Organisation
Belgium	SCIENSANO
Croatia	University of Osijek, Faculty of Food Technology Osijek
	Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food
Cyprus	State General Laboratory of Cyprus
Czech Republic	National Institute of Public Health
Denmark	The National Food Institute, Technical University of Denmark
Estonia	National Institute for Health Development
Finland	The National Institute for Health and Welfare
France	Anses
Germany	Max Rubner-Institut
Greece	Hellenic Food Authority
Ireland	University College Dublin
Italy	Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria (Council for Agricultural Research and Economics - CREA)
Latvia	Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment "BIOR"
Luxembourg	Luxembourg Veterinary and Food Administration - ALVA
Malta	Malta Competition & Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA)
Netherlands	Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA)
	National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)
Norway	Norwegian Scientific Committee of Food and Environment (VKM)
Poland	National Institute of Public Health NIH - National Research Institute
Portugal	National Institute of Health - Economic and Food Safety Authority (ASAE)
Romania	National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority
Slovak Republic	National Agricultural and Food Centre – Food Research Institute
Slovenia	National Institute of Public Health of Slovenia

Spain	Complutense University of Madrid
	Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN)
Sweden	Swedish Food Agency

- Observers:
  Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (Switzerland); Food and Veterinarian Agency (Kosovo*); Centre of Research Excellence in Nutrition and Metabolism Institute for Medical Research, University of Belgrade (Serbia); GDFC – Department of Risk Assessment (Turkey); Food Safety Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Food and Veterinary Agency of Republic of North Macedonia (North Macedonia).
- Hearing Experts:
  CAPNUTRA Capacity development in Nutrition; Institute of Public Health of the University of Porto (ISPUP-U.Porto)
- European Commission:
  DG SANTE; Joint Research Centre (JRC).
- International Organisations:
  Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- EFSA:
  iDATA Unit: Anastasia Livaniou (AL); Andreia Lopes (ALo); Androniki Naska (AN); Elissavet Valanou; Fabrizio Abbinante (FA); Krystalia Niforou; Pedro Ferreira; Sofia Ioannidou (SI); Valentina Bocca (VB)
  NIF Unit: Ariane Titz (AT); Lucia Fabiani
  MESE Unit: Laura Martino (LM); Petra Gergelová (PG); Rita Ferreira de Sousa (RF); Zsuzsanna Horvath (ZH);
  LA Unit: Anna Schuster (AS)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.
Apologies were received from Hungary and Iceland

2. Tour-de-table

Short presentation of all Network meeting attendees.

3. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

4. Food Consumption data at EFSA – updates

Anastasia Livaniou (AL) gave an update on EFSA's work related to food consumption data collection. The presentation outlined the evolution of the EU Menu initiative from 2011 to 2023 and the European Comprehensive Food Consumption Database, which as of December 2024, includes 91 surveys (40 from the EU Menu), covering over

163,000 subjects. Recent and upcoming updates to the database were highlighted, focusing on the new surveys to be added as well as corrections to food coding and quantity data, highlighting the collaboration with data providers for these amendments, to ensure accuracy and transparency. Information was shared on the different preparatory activities leading EFSA to the next round of EU Menu surveys, including the launching of a Working Group in the coming months, to work on the update of the Eu Menu Guidance. The presentation also emphasised the importance of continuous collection of existing dietary data, outside the EU Menu framework before launching the EU Menu 2. It concluded with a plea to inform EFSA if consumption data are available at national level, and a call for continued collaboration to ensure the success of future data collection efforts.

Switzerland (CH) inquired about the next update of the database, which is expected to take place in 2026. The Netherlands (NL) intervened to confirm that amendments and corrections made to the data, particularly those related to the FoodEx2 codes and quantities are communicated to the respective data providers.

5. European Survey on Fish and Other Seafood Consumption and related Consumer Awareness

Sofia Ioannidou (SI) presented the European Survey on Fish and Other Seafood Consumption and related consumer awareness project under an EC mandate to evaluate fish consumption patterns and the efficacy of national advice in relation to their contamination with mercury. The project involved two-time point surveys; across 27 EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway (first wave), and 15 countries (second wave). It targeted adults, adolescents, and pregnant women using a random probability sampling method, and a boost sample via social media specifically for adolescents and pregnant women.

Preliminary results indicated a relatively low awareness among consumers regarding contaminants in fish and seafood, with only 3% answering more than half of the relevant questions correctly. Despite moderate awareness of national consumption advice (38% of general population, 37% of pregnant women), around 70% of those aware reported adjusting their consumption accordingly. The data also suggested that factors such as seasonality, cost, and consumption trends may influence consumption habits more strongly than awareness alone. The results from both waves will be analysed and detailed in a scientific due at the end of 2025.

Netherlands (NL) raised a question regarding whether differences or comparisons between countries had been considered in the analysis. In response, SI explained that while the data to support such comparisons is available, this analysis was not requested by the European Commission.

Germany (DE) inquired about changes between the first and second point of the questionnaire. SI responded that EFSA is currently exploring it, and the factors that might have influenced differences in consumption, noting that one of the surveys was carried out during the summer, which could have affected the results.

Belgium (BE) proposed that the classification of fish groups based on contaminant limits could be reconsidered and suggested including environmental impacts as part of the analysis. It also mentioned that Belgium is currently taking such aspects into account when updating their national food recommendations.

6. Food Composition Project

Andreia Lopes presented the EU Food composition Database (EU FCDB) project, beginning with a brief overview of EFSA's previous work in this area. To frame the discussion, relevant background information and definitions were provided. The presentation then shifted to the current EU FCDB project, highlighting its scope, objectives, and relevance within the broader food data landscape. An outline of the project deliverables was shared, along with the current status of the work and the next steps foreseen, including the pilot submission and the full submission of data from 16 countries by the end of the year. A key message of the presentation was to encourage the involvement of the food consumption community, not only as data providers contributing national data, but also as future collaborators in maintaining and updating the database over time.

Norway (NO) questioned whether the final database would contain country-specific data aligned with consumption data, or whether it would be compiled in an aggregated format. It was clarified that the database will contain only composition data, which can be filtered by country. However, it will not be directly matched with consumption data. BE highlighted the potential benefits of such a match, particularly for certain types of assessments, and pointed out that using the FoodEx2 coding system for both databases will make this integration easier.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) inquired how existing standards from INFOODS and EuroFIR were considered in the development of the dataset. AL responded that these recommendations had been taken into account, however, the corresponding guidelines will be published at a later stage, before the initiation of the maintenance phase of the database, and not during the current phase of the project.

In response to a question from BE about expanding the list of 16 countries, it was confirmed that there are indeed plans to include more countries in the future. These issues will be addressed in greater detail after the conclusion of the project, potentially through a dedicated workshop with the Network, where future maintenance and expansion strategies will be discussed and developed.

7. EFSA Rebuild Data Framework project update

Valentina Bocca (VB) provided an update on the ongoing Rebuild Data Framework (DF) project, aimed at modernising how data is ingested, managed, and analysed within the organisation. One of the first tangible outputs is the DietEx tool, which estimates dietary exposure and offers both a user interface and an API for machine-to-machine communication.

The presentation focused on the development of a new data ingestion and management system under Work Package 2 (WP2). This includes a first wave of implementation - currently underway - which will replace the existing data collection systems (DCF, SAS, and MicroStrategy). A second wave will follow, extending the solution to cover additional use cases. Development is being carried out using an iterative approach, structured around a backlog and sprints.

It were also introduced the main tools and platforms being adopted in the project, including Azure Cloud, Databricks, and Power BI. The solution under development will enable data providers to interact with the system through multiple channels,

including a user-friendly web portal, APIs, EFSA's own environment and tools for data preparation, validation, and submission, or dashboards for analysis and insights

AL asked if the new platform would remain user-friendly. VB confirmed that while the core model will remain the same, the new platform is being designed to offer multiple interaction options and should be even more accessible, particularly for users with limited IT skills. Fabrizio Abbinante (FA) added that the new platform will also be machine-friendly, enabling the use of AI and allowing for automated data transfers.

Portugal questioned whether existing data formats, such as SSD2 and the current data model, would continue to be used. It was confirmed that these formats will remain unchanged. NL raised concerns about the use of Microsoft, a U.S.-based provider, given the current political context. FA responded that the European Commission is actively monitoring the situation and conducting the necessary assessments.

Regarding timelines, it was noted that the current DCF platform is expected to be replaced in 2025, with a pilot phase planned for 2026. Full transition to the new system is scheduled for 2027, aligning with the next cycle of the EU MENU. AL concluded by noting that mock-ups of the new platform will be shared as soon as they are available.

8. Lead mandate: strengths and challenges when using the food consumption data

MESE staff presented the mandate on lead, its objectives, the challenges in the use of the food consumption database when estimating the exposure to this contaminant and future perspectives in the evaluation of aggregate exposure at EFSA. It was highlighted that a roadmap for aggregate exposure was published last year, and the current mandate is an example of collaboration with sister agencies (EEA in this case) to achieve estimate of exposure from multiple routes and sources that will become increasingly relevant for the future.

The discussion addressed the feasibility of integrating more detailed information into food consumption data, particularly in relation to geo-localization and production methods.

DE asked for clarification on whether geo-localization refers to the place of consumption or if it would also be realistic to know where the food was produced. In response, Laura Martino (LM) explained that a pilot test with limited data could be used to assess the feasibility of capturing such information. While full geo-localization may be ambitious at this stage, she noted that identifying if food is locally produced or imported would be a valuable and more manageable starting point. LM also mentioned the potential relevance of human biomonitoring, though acknowledged its complexity.

Petra Gergelová (PG) contributed by highlighting the importance of distinguishing between different sources of animal products, such as wild or hunted animals. PG asked whether it would be feasible to reflect this distinction within the FoodEx2 classification system, suggesting that methods of food production, such as hunted, captured, or farmed, should be more clearly separated in the classification. AL

emphasised that care must be taken to avoid introducing new codes that could lead to multiple classification paths for the same food item. Advice, and more clear information about EFSA's preferred way to codify by adding facets should be given in a future guidance. Additionally, AL informed that the ongoing project SMART EU Menu aims at simplifying and avoiding these codification challenges.

9. Exposure assessment for the scientific evaluation of the safety in use of preparations from the fruits of sweet and bitter fennel

Ariane Titz (AT) and Rita Ferreira de Sousa (RF) provided an overview of EFSA's ongoing assessment of the safety of fennel fruit preparations, with focus on the exposure assessment carried out under this mandate. The presentation was centered on the dietary exposure to p-allylalkoxybenzenes, particularly estragole, methyleugenol, and safrole, which are known for their genotoxic and carcinogenic properties. These compounds are found in fennel fruits and other spices, as well as in some fruits and vegetables. EFSA used data from a systematic literature review, a call for data, and from EFSA's Comprehensive Food Consumption Database to derive an estimation of the exposure across different population age-groups.

The results show that in certain EU countries and age groups the MOE exposure to p-allylalkoxybenzenes at the higher intake percentiles (P90, P95) is below 10,000. Fennel fruit infusions were found to contribute significantly to the exposure to total p-allylalkoxybenzenes in infants, toddlers, other children and the elderly. However, their impact diminishes in older children (except in Germany) and is low in adolescents and adults. The conclusions highlight a risk which is associated with the consumption of fennel fruit infusions particularly in infants and toddlers.

AL asked about the rationale for launching a call for occurrence data and whether data were already FoodEx2-coded. RF explained that these compounds were not included in EFSA's routine monitoring occurrence database. A template was provided to data providers to facilitate submission, nevertheless, RF noted that the data submission process allowed some flexibility in how information was reported, often resulting in free-text descriptions, which required EFSA to undertake an extensive data cleaning and FoodEx-2 coding effort.

PG inquired about the representativeness of the occurrence data across European countries. RF responded that the data received were limited, primarily from Italy, Germany, with some additional data originating from outside the EU. For fennel fruit, data from outside the EU were excluded, but for some other foods, inclusion of non-EU data was necessary due to a lack of alternative sources.

10. menuCH-Kids: Study design and lessons learnt from the national nutrition survey on children and adolescents in Switzerland

CH presented the Swiss nutrition survey menuCH-Kids, which targets children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 from all three language regions. The study applies the EU menu methodology, including two non-consecutive 24-hour dietary recalls, anthropometric measurements, and voluntary bio sampling (urine and blood). A

broad range of data was collected, such as socio-economic status, dietary habits, physical activity, food insecurity, and parental information. Bio sample handling follows high biobanking standards, with rapid freezing and centralized storage.

Recruitment was population-based using professional agencies and multi-channel strategies. Although participation was higher than in recent comparable studies, it remained low at 11%. Incentives, tailored communication, and personal feedback were key motivators. The study spanned all weekdays and seasons, with visits conducted across six study centres. A satisfaction questionnaire revealed general approval of the process, although time commitment was a concern. menuCH-Kids addressed a critical data gap in Switzerland, offering a foundation for public health strategies, risk assessments, and future research. The biobank enables long-term analyses, and digital self-assessment tools are being considered to improve participation in future efforts.

AL emphasized the surprising finding that adolescents preferred visiting the study centres over using apps or self-assessment tools, and highlighted that fully transitioning to online methods could lead to the exclusion of participants who are less digitally inclined.

Germany (DE) approached the low overall participation rate despite considerable recruitment efforts, and asked if anything would be done differently in hindsight. CH responded that professional, well-communicated outreach helped build trust, however alternative or more engaging feedback to the participants at the end of the study might boost motivation.

Greece (EL) questioned about the low response rate to the satisfaction questionnaire (only about 10%). CH clarified that the questionnaire was planned late in the study and was only shared to the final 25% of participants, of whom 25% responded.

Finally, Androniki Naska (AN) inquired about the feasibility of using 24-hour recalls for younger children. CH explained that a feasibility study showed that children under 13 struggle with 24-hour recalls, which led to the use of dietary records (food diaries) instead for that age group.

11. New concept of the German National Nutrition Monitoring (nemo)

The new concept of the German National Nutrition Monitoring (nemo) was presented by DE. Continuous surveys covering adults, children, and adolescents are planned, with iodine monitoring as an essential component of nemo. All dietary surveys will be equally distributed over all weekdays and seasons. For nemo adults and nemo kids/family the status of critical nutrients will be assessed by blood and urine samples. In addition, the prevalence of subclinical preliminary stages for diet-related diseases will be assessed for some age-groups. For the iodine monitoring the iodine excretion in spot urine as indicator for iodine status at population level will be measured.

For nemo adults (18 to ≤80 years) an initial study with a dietary assessment, anthropometric measurements, bio samples as well as further aspects of nutritional behaviour will be conducted at first. Besides data collection some methodological aspects like minimally invasive methods will be tested. The development of a digital dietary assessment tool is foreseen in parallel. A separate online survey with different

aspects of nutritional behaviour and health was already conducted. For nemo kids/family two separate online surveys for the two age groups (3 months to <10 years and 10 to <18 years) are planned. Before beginning of the continuous surveys pilot studies with 5 to 10% of the calculated sample size will be conducted.

EL inquired whether a validated questionnaire would be used to assess food insecurity or if a new tool had been developed, and asked how sodium intake would be estimated. DE responded that for the assessment of food insecurity questions from different existing validated instruments were used, and that sodium intake will be estimated by sodium excretion in spot urine as well as creatinine measurements in spot urine.

AN raised a concern regarding participant dropout after the first home visit and suggested including the 24-hour recall during that interview to mitigate this risk. DE explained that it will be challenging to have enough trained interviewers available to conduct the fieldwork, but agreed that it was a valuable point to consider.

NL asked if the digital tool being developed would be used for this study. DE clarified that the tool will not be used because it will only be available by the end of this year and that the main priority is to develop a tool that is self-administered. AL questioned if this tool was a continuation of the GloboDiet project and how this links to ongoing work from the WHO. DE informed that these are so far two independent initiatives, and AL informed the Network that EFSA will be monitoring all related activities in the area of developing harmonised dietary assessment tools.

12. French Version of Intake24 for the Albane Survey

France (FR) gave a presentation on the French version of Intake24, adapted for the Albane Survey, a new rolling dietary monitoring program replacing previous national surveys (INCA3 and Esteban). Intake24 is an open-source, self-administered online tool used to collect detailed dietary intake data through two pathways: recalls for individuals aged 15–79 and records for children aged 0–14. It includes flexible features such as food-specific questions (facets), multiple quantification methods, and a connection to Open Food Facts via barcode scanning, allowing indirect, accurate identification of branded products.

The pilot study showed that using Intake24 in Albane improved participant engagement and data quality compared to previous methods, thanks to its user-friendly interface and built-in reminders for often forgotten foods. While self-administration worked well overall, a dietician-supported protocol remained essential for some participants. The tool's modularity and effective data capture confirmed that Intake24 is a viable and efficient alternative to GloboDiet, supporting continuity in national dietary data collection efforts in France.

Zsuzsanna Horvath (ZH) asked how the tool handles non-branded food items and whether the brand name is essential in the data collection process. France clarified that each food item is first linked to a generic food from their predefined food list, and branding is treated as an optional facet, not the starting point.

Regarding self-administered data, FR informed that quality control is handled by the research team but is still under development. Data from the pilot phase did not raise significant concerns. Although there are no visible cut-off values shown to

participants during data entry, thresholds exist in the backend to flag unusually high values during data export.

BE asked whether other countries are interested in adopting the same software (Intake24). France confirmed that the tool, developed by the University of Cambridge, can be adapted for use in other countries. Although this was the first French-language implementation, the software is open source and allows full customization, including phrasing and structure. BE added that Cambridge has a dedicated team for adapting the software to different national contexts and languages. It was highlighted that the integration of facets into the tool was a new and promising development.

AL asked whether automatic FoodEx2 coding is incorporated within the tool. France noted that while this is not yet implemented, there is potential to integrate product coding for local databases, which could simplify post-processing and make the tool more broadly usable.

13. Risk-Benefit Assessment for sustainable dietary shift: Evaluating the public health impact of plant-based alternatives

In terms of EU FORA project with INRAE institute, Secalim unit, and Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food have done Risk-Benefit Assessment (RBA). As part of the EU-FORA project conducted as collaboration of the INRAE institute (Secalim unit) with the Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food, a Risk-Benefit Assessment (RBA) was carried out. The project built upon the NovRBA model, which evaluated a minced beef patty substitution scenario using insect powder (house cricket), and extended it by including plant-based alternatives (red kidney bean and green lentil). A probabilistic exposure assessment was performed to evaluate nutrient content, as well as microbiological and toxicological components. Individual risks and benefits were assessed by combining dose-response estimates with exposure data.

Overall health impacts for each scenario were estimated in Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), using Monte Carlo simulations to integrate uncertainty and variability in model inputs and parameters. DALY estimates were generated for France, Greece, and Croatia, with nutrition emerging as the most influential factor. Full substitution of minced beef patty with house cricket dough, green lentils, or red kidney beans led to reductions in DALYs related to nutrition in all countries, with the greatest impact observed for sodium and fiber intake. This RBA framework demonstrated its potential to support evidence-based decisions that promote healthier and more sustainable dietary transitions.

AL inquired about the rationale behind the selection of these specific alternative protein sources in the presented study. Croatia responded that the cricket-based model had already been developed in a previous project (NovRBA), which made it convenient to adopt. In contrast, the plant-based alternatives—lentils and kidney beans—were chosen because of the growing relevance of sustainability in dietary choices, a key focus of the EUFORA project.

CH asked specifically why crickets were chosen as an alternative protein source. AN, who was a co-supervisor of the project, explained that crickets are among the insect

types most accepted by consumers and are also feasible from a food technology standpoint. This made them the most realistic choice for the scenario modelled.

14. Dietary surveys as background for food-based dietary guidelines

NO presented the Norwegian food-based dietary guidelines. Commissioned by the Norwegian Directorate of Health, VKM has been asked to calculate and assess the extent to which a diet, in line with the consultation draft for new national dietary guidelines dated 22 March 2024, will meet the average requirements and recommended intakes for nutrients for the adult population, as given in the latest Norwegian reference values for energy and nutrients.

The assessment concluded that the content of vitamins and minerals that are below the reference values in the dietary guidance scenarios can potentially be increased by increasing the amounts of food groups that are good sources, given that there is room to increase the amount of these food groups within the framework of the dietary guidelines, and that the energy requirements are not met. The final Norwegian food based dietary guidelines were adjusted in line with the findings in the VKM assessment.

CH asked whether sustainability considerations were included in the development of the national dietary guidelines. NO clarified that while sustainability was included in the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations, it was not part of the national dietary guidelines due to a political decision. Sustainability and risk issues fall under different authorities. It was also noted by NO that the Directorate of Health is responsible for disseminating the results.

15. Welcome back and Apologies for absence

The Chair provided a short summary of Day 1.

16. Database of the Labelling and Packaging Information of Food Products on the Belgian Market - SCANFOODLABEL

BE presented an overview of SCANFOODLABEL, a Belgian initiative led by Sciensano aimed at building a structured database of food labelling and packaging information for products available on the market. The presentation focused on how this project supports evidence-based decision-making in the areas of food safety and nutrition, with particular attention to food additives, contaminants, flavourings, and nutritional content.

Data is obtained through web scraping of online retail platforms displaying food product information. These raw datasets often contain inconsistencies and require transformation into a structured format. To enable large-scale and up-to-date data collection, an automated processing pipeline was developed. Products are processed using AI-based classification and Natural Language Processing, enabling structured mapping to FoodEx2 and EU Regulation 1333/2008 categories. A key output is an interactive dashboard that enables food additive-level analysis (presence and co-occurrence expressed both at FoodEx and EC group/category levels) and report

generation, with further developments planned for ingredient exploration and trend monitoring. This tool supports refined exposure assessments and provides actionable insights for regulatory monitoring and food policy development.

In response to a question from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA) regarding missing Nutri-Score labels, it was explained that if Nutri-Score is mandatory, national authorities may request the food industry to include it. In addition, all foods in the SCANFOODLABEL database are classified according to the NOVA system.

NL inquired about the matching with FoodEx2 classification system, and BE reported a FoodEx2 coding accuracy of approximately 90%, higher than EFSA's Smart Coding Tool. They used multiple AI approaches, improving accuracy with additional variables. Manual validation was conducted during the model's training using smaller data sets.

AL asked whether the project also makes use of FA legislative-class facet of FoodEx2, or whether this was handled separately through independent classification. BE explained that they are using EFSA's existing mapping between additives and FoodEx2, where available. They have also developed their own glossary of food additives and functions to support the classification and are working on implementing FA facet 33.

17. FABLE – the Food and Beverages Labels Explorer

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) presented the Food And Beverages Labels Explorer (FABLE), a tool developed by JRC to support the monitoring of the food offer across Europe. FABLE hosts data on ~185k packaged food and beverages spanning across 32 food categories from 21 European countries. The JRC gave an overview of what FABLE is, the policy context for its development, showcased the features that are currently available and presented the ones coming soon.

Currently, a module called 'Nutrients' is available, containing information from the nutrition declaration from products collected by EUREMO, JA Best-ReMaP and JANPA, and other national efforts. Two more modules are envisaged by the end of this year: a) 'Ingredients', prioritising sugars, sweeteners, colours, other additives that are not sweeteners or colours, vitamins and minerals; and b) 'Trends' to assess the evolution of products' nutrition quality across the years. Further data are expected from the JA PreventNCD after 2026. During the discussion, potential ways of use or expansion of the tool by the EFSA FCD network members or other ways of collaboration were explored, for example adding new datasets from other European countries or using FABLE in the context of food consumption surveys.

Serbia (RS) inquired whether other countries could join the project. The JRC confirmed that participation is possible provided that countries follow the same data collection template, and offered to share the standardized template and the classification methodology used for food items. BE suggested that incorporating language models to cover multiple languages would add significant value to the project, and expressed interest in collaboration to combine efforts, particularly concerning food additives and ingredient classifications.

The Institute of Public Health of the University of Porto (ISPUP-U.Porto) highlighted that while the project focuses primarily on processed foods, it is important not to overlook other food categories. They asked if the project links with FoodEx2 or other initiatives to ensure complementarity. The JRC clarified that the main objective is to

monitor reformulation efforts and maintain active use of collected data. However, they are open to exploring possibilities for linking the project with other European initiatives to enhance synergy.

18. FAO's Food and Diet Domain

FAO presented the FAOSTAT Food and Diet Domain, the first centralised location for the sharing of statistics on all forms of dietary-related data. The Domain provides statistics from complementary sources of dietary data across different dimensions of the food supply chain, from supply through to consumption, helping to inform priorities to enable healthy diets. More specifically, the Domain provides energy, macro- and micro-nutrient statistics and is composed of four subdomains presenting: 1) availability based on FAO supply utilization accounts (SUA) data; 2) apparent intake based on household consumption and expenditure surveys (HCES); 3) intake based on nationally representative individual-level quantitative dietary data surveys; and 4) statistics related to the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) indicator.

Global knowledge products, such as an analytical brief, and a new global nutrient conversion table for the FAO Supply Utilization Accounts, amongst other materials, were prepared to accompany the new domain. Harmonizing and sharing dietary data expands the range of potential data uses and increases the number of stakeholders who use the data. The Food and Diet Domain will be continually updated and extended with more statistics, countries, and indicators. Countries are invited to disseminate statistics from their data if they wish.

RF noted that not many individual quantitative data is currently available and asked if there was any data in the pipeline to be added to the platform. FAO responded that a couple of datasets are planned to be added in October this year. These will be included in both the GIFT platform and the summary statistics domain.

BE expressed interest in knowing from which year the surveys being collected originate, mentioning that Belgium has household survey data from an earlier period and would like to understand if it could be considered. FAO replied that they have a flexible range regarding the period of surveys, and invited BE to reach out to further discuss whether her data would be suitable for inclusion.

19. Proposal to lean the handling of public access to documents (PAD) applications on food consumption data

Anna Schuster (AS) presented a proposal from the Legal Affairs Unit (LA) to facilitate the handling of public access to documents (PAD) applications on food consumption data in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 (hereinafter "*the PAD Regulation*").

In particular, LA proposed to process PAD applications (i) by using the official data transmission schema (publicly available here, Supporting Information>Appendices folder 2> Excel file), with an updated list of protected variables, as well as to (ii) lean the bilateral engagements with the data providers of the different food consumption data surveys, and in particular Articles 4(4) and 4(5) of the PAD Regulation with the prior agreements foreseen therein in relation to all incoming PADs for the same survey. The main goal is to simplify engagements with data providers by reducing

complexity in the data sharing process while ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

Italy (IT) raised a question regarding the conditions under which EFSA releases food consumption data, specifically whether the use of such data is restricted to the stated research purpose and whether further use or sharing is permitted. AS clarified that data is released upon request to the specified applicant and these must be used in compliance with Article 16 of the PAD Regulation. This includes restrictions on reproduction and further use without prior consent from the data provider.

Further discussion addressed the challenges Member States face with the PAD process. BE expressed concern over the lack of feedback about who uses their data and for what purposes, which complicates national reporting and justifying investments in data collection. While EFSA can provide annual summaries on the number and type of requests, it cannot systematically collect intended-use information due to legal limitations. AS confirmed it would follow up on the use of the new data transmission schema and prior agreements via email after the meeting.

20. Focal Points tailor-made activities

Due to force-majeure, the meeting had to close earlier hence, this item was not presented.

21. Any Other Business - Conclusions

AL informed participants that, in the context of EU Menu Guidance, an ad-hoc Working Group will be set up. Members of the FCD Network who are interested in contributing will have the opportunity to express their interest via EFSA's expert database. Regarding future meetings, AL indicated that next year's Network meeting will most likely take place in September or October. Participants were also informed that a satisfaction questionnaire will also be circulated following the meeting.

Finally, AL also inquired about planned national dietary surveys across countries. Updates included:

- **Norway**: The Norkost 4 survey was completed last year. A new survey targeting children and adolescents is planned for next year or the year after.
- **Finland**: Data collection in adolescents has just been completed. A new adult survey is foreseen towards the end of the decade.
- **Sweden**: A survey in adults is currently in the planning phase and expected to begin in approximately two years.
- **Netherlands**: A study involving teenagers and young adults is currently ongoing.
- **Portugal**: An initiative was launched in 2023 to secure funding for a new survey, but the process remains pending.
- **Czech Republic**: A survey involving both adults and children is currently ongoing, and results are expected next year.
- **Switzerland**: Confirmed willingness to share data from their recent survey with EFSA.

AL summarised the meeting conclusions and some action points and closed the meeting.

22. Workshop SMART EU Menu (Preparatory activities for EU Menu 2)

The SMART EU Menu consortium presented the project, its objectives and the contributions of the various organisations toward improving the EU Menu guidance. The workshop was structured around three key work packages (WPs):

- **WP1: FoodEx2 simplification and compendium of facets**
  CAPNUTRA presented WP1 informing that under this objective, a critical review of the FoodEx2 coding system is being conducted, focusing on simplifying descriptors and developing a harmonised set of relevant facets by food group. Expert consultations, workshops, and structured questionnaires will be used to identify redundancies and improve consistency in food description and coding practices.
- **WP2: Central Food Propensity Questionnaire**

  ISPUP-U.Porto provided an update on the work underway in WP2. This involves collecting and comparing the structure existing FPQs used in EU Menu surveys and evaluating their performance across food groups and age groups. The aim is to reduce survey burden and improve data reliability, particularly in estimating usual intakes and supporting risk assessments.
- **WP3: Software specifications and protocol proposal for self-administered dietary assessment**

  National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) presented the results from the recent ICDAM symposium, and its importance for the objectives under WP3. Key features identified for self-administered tools include improved food search, barcode scanning, user feedback options, and flexible integration with FoodEx2 coding. Discussions also addressed which specifications may become optional when using self-administered tools.

The FCD Network was invited to contribute by sharing their expertise through interactive polls (WOOCLAP) and will be asked to complete detailed questionnaires after the meeting.