**Strengthening policy for healthy and sustainable diets: learning from innovation in practice**

**Concept note and Agenda**

**Date:** June 14, 2024 09:00-12:00

**Venue:** UN City, Copenhagen

**Background**

Unhealthy food systems – spanning food production through to trade, marketing and retail – are a major driver of unhealthy diets, and consequently a major contributor to NCDs as well as negative climate impacts. The transformation of food systems so that they promote good nutrition and health (and also safeguard against biodiversity losses and climate change) is a critical contemporary challenge. In Australia, state and federal Governments have committed to adopting effective evidence-based measures to transform food systems to support healthy diets. These policies could play a pivotal role in improving the healthiness of food systems, but translating and operationalising best-practice cross-sectoral policy has proved challenging for governments. Although we have clear evidence on ‘what works’, the World Health Organization, in support of governments in Australia and the European Region, has identified an urgent need for evidence regarding the ‘how’ of effective design, coordination and implementation of food system policy, and supports policy makers to design and implement effective policies to promote health, environmental and economic dimensions of food systems to enable a ‘win-win-win’ (health-environment-economic) outcomes in a rapidly changing food system context.

This project brings together government partners in Australia and the WHO European Region with leading Australian nutrition policy researchers to directly address this gap and support implementation of the full policy package envisaged by WHO and in Australia’s new preventive health and obesity policy framework. Australia and countries in the WHO European Region have been global leaders in implementing evidence-informed food systems policies, but report numerous challenges in achieving policy success.

This project aims to examine the ‘how’ of nutrition and food systems policy making, and to identify strategies to address the real challenges of designing, coordinating and implementing effective policies. The research will lead to recommendations to support best-practice nutrition actions in national and sub-national food system policies across relevant sectors of government. The study aims are to:

1. Use co-designed research methods to (a) understand approaches to successful food systems and nutrition policy innovation and implementation in Australia and countries in the WHO European Region, and (b) identify factors that have facilitated the adoption of strong national and subnational food systems and nutrition policy measures.

2. Develop strategies and resources that would support public health policy makers with the adoption, coordination and implementation of policies to improve food systems and nutrition.

The proposed seminar will provide an overview of the first round of research case studies planned and give an update on the current status of key policy areas in the region such as procurement, digital marketing, food systems governance mechanisms and other policy innovations to support healthy and sustainable food systems. It will also identify priority countries and any additional key policy areas.

**Objectives:**

* Sharing the proposed research case studies planned for the project and receiving feedback.
* Discussing the status of key policy areas (procurement, digital marketing, food systems governance) to support healthy and sustainable diets.
* Identify priority countries and policy areas.
* Plan next steps for the partnership project (including an in-person meeting in Melbourne in November 2024).