



BALANCED NUTRITION AT WORK
 The European FOOD project:
 a successful Public Private Partnership

FINAL PUBLICATION



FOOD: Fighting Obesity through Offer and Demand



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co-funded by the General Directorate for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO)***

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 🍃 **page 2** Glossary
- 🍃 **page 3** Introduction to the final publication
- 🍃 **page 4** Summary
- 🍃 **page 5** Rational for the project
- 🍃 **page 6** The objectives of the FOOD project
- 🍃 **page 7** The Partners
- 🍃 **page 8** The first stages of the programme
- 🍃 **page 10** Recommendations for restaurants
- 🍃 **page 11** Recommendations for employees
- 🍃 **page 12** The road show: the launch of the tools
- 🍃 **page 13** Employee and restaurant tools
- 🍃 **page 16** The survey of evaluation - main findings
- 🍃 **page 19** Country relevant results and evaluation of the recent survey - new tools for the last stage of the project
- 🍃 **page 21** The next stages and the future of the project

Glossary

Chef:

Staff working in a restaurant kitchen

Clients/Customers:

People eating in a restaurant. Mostly refers to employees having lunch in a restaurant

Communication tools:

The deliverables of the project that helped to reach the targets

Company:

Describes the workplace where Employees are working

Employees:

People who work in companies.

Can be referred to as customers or clients in a restaurant setting

Employer:

The Human Resources Manager or the CEO of a company

FOOD:

Acronym for Fighting Obesity through Offer and Demand

FOOD countries:

Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden

FOOD project:

The 28 months long pilot project co-funded by the European Commission

FOOD programme:

The term used to describe the next phase of the pilot project, which is open to new partners

Meal voucher:

Generic term for Ticket Restaurant®. In the case of the FOOD project, this is the main channel of communication between restaurants and employees

Mystery visits:

Unannounced visits to restaurants were conducted as part of the evaluation process

Restaurant:

General term to describe where employees have lunch, outside the workplace premises (unlike workplace canteens)

Survey:

Two types of questionnaires - qualitative and quantitative - directed at the two target groups

Note

This document offers a summary of the 28 months long pilot project. Methodology and aims of the project are presented together with the tools that were developed. This summary further explains the rationale behind the actions taken and the project implementation in the participating countries.

The purpose of this publication is to provide information to those who are interested in the promotion of healthy eating habits for employees in the workplace.

“It will be essential to build partnerships between all stakeholders such as government, civil society, the private sector, professional networks, the media and international organisations, across all levels (national, sub-national and local).”

World Health Organisation (2006), European Charter on counteracting obesity, Article 2.3.5

“Workplaces are important settings for health promotion and disease prevention. People need to be given the opportunity to make healthy choices in the workplace in order to reduce their exposure to risk. Further, the cost to employers of morbidity attributed to non-communicable diseases is increasing rapidly. Workplaces should make possible healthy food choices and support and encourage physical activity.”

World Health Organisation (2004), Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

“Businesses can also support the development of healthy lifestyles in the workplace. Together with employee organisations, they should also develop proposals/guidelines for ways in which companies of different sizes can introduce simple, cost-effective measures to promote healthy lifestyles of employees.”

European Commission (2007), White Paper on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues



Summary

The FOOD project was created as a Public Private Partnership wishing to address the rising concern of obesity in Europe. The EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health provided the policy framework for the project with DG SANCO securing the funding through their Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC).

Experts joined by a common objective to promote healthy eating, proposed a 5-step project to create and implement workplace healthy lifestyle interventions.

The two main objectives of the project are:

- **To improve the nutritional habits of employees by raising their awareness to health issues.**
- **Through work with restaurants, to improve the nutritional quality of the food on offer.**

To meet these objectives, the FOOD project has created essential channels of communication between the companies and the restaurants using its unique network of contacts, following **five complementary sets of actions:**

- A **review** of existing health promotion programmes in the workplace and in restaurants was followed by two questionnaires. The first was a **quantitative survey**, addressing employees (52,000) and restaurants (5,000) to better understand the project's needs. The second, a **qualitative study**, was done by conducting 50 interviews in restaurants in 12 countries.
- Following a comparative study of the surveys' results, **recommendations** were made by the partners.
- **Simple tools were developed, adapted and piloted** for restaurants and companies.
- Pilots were **evaluated**.
- Following the evaluation, **tools were adapted and best practises disseminated**.

The partners have decided to continue developing and disseminating the project after the end of the funding period and the support from the European Commission. The partners are motivated to take advantage of the actions, experience and results of the project and create an easily adaptable programme. The methodology developed and the many deliverables should act as an incentive to encourage new partners from other countries to join the consortium.

From Project to Programme, FOOD is an example of a long term, efficient and sustainable partnership initiated thanks to EU funds.

The project background and rationale

In 2008, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that more than 1,5 billion adults suffer from overweight worldwide, 500 million from obesity. In Europe, 130 million people are obese and over 50% of the European population is considered overweight.

The European Union is actively engaged in the fight against obesity and excess weight, through an integrated strategy to promote health. The White Paper on the strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity highlighted the importance of the private and public sectors working together. One of the key ways the EC delivers on this is through the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Funding for such joint initiatives is often provided by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC).

As specified in the European Commission White Paper (2007) with regards to nutrition, companies can contribute to the promotion of a healthy way of life at work taking simple and cost effective measures toward improving the well-being of their employees thus tackling obesity.

In large companies, increasingly there is access to better nutrition at lunchtime in workplace canteens. In small businesses that do not provide food, employees who go out for lunch, find it harder to locate healthy options in the surrounding restaurants and food outlets.

Companies, of any size or in any country still remain an important setting for promoting healthy eating and as an information channel to their employees.

A balanced diet brings with it well-being for employees that will result in their increased productivity; this in turn will decrease rates of absenteeism. Report from The international Labour Organisation points out that employees that have access to healthy eating, increase their productivity by up to 20% ("Food at Work", International Labour Office, Geneva, 2005).

Meal vouchers - a social equaliser

Many people around the world spend more than half their waking hours at work. Quite often at worksites, workers are of a similar social and ethnic background, education and gender. This makes the setting an ideal target for workplace interventions. Despite being a "captive" audience, they are quite often neglected when it comes to targeted interventions. In order to perform well, employees need to be well fed and rested.

The lunch break is one basic element for good health and well-being for a healthy workforce/an employee. The lunch voucher was created more than fifty years ago to meet employees' needs when they did not have access to a canteen, especially in small businesses where setting up a canteen was not economically feasible. Initially, lunch vouchers provided employees with a hot meal yet now priorities have changed and more and more employees are looking for healthy solutions at lunchtime. This is due to the shift in dietary imbalance from under-consumption to over-consumption. Addressing these issues is a challenge for employers and policy-makers alike.

Meal vouchers are seen as a powerful channel of communication between the customers and the restaurants and a tool to promote healthy messages to employees at lunchtime.

The FOOD project objectives

FOOD (Fighting Obesity through Offer and Demand) is a European project which, using its unique approach, aims to promote nutritionally balanced meals. By working jointly with restaurant managers and employees/consumers, FOOD is endeavouring to create an original, essential channel between Offer and Demand to influence eating habits during the workday while at the same time improving the food on offer.

The FOOD project was established in 2008 by a Public Private Consortium, coordinated by Edenred following the success of the pilot programme “Food and Balance” in 12 different countries. This programme, which was promoted to the vast network of meal vouchers affiliates, provides information to restaurant managers and their customers about the main principles of healthy eating through simple, concrete nutritional recommendations. This was done using a mascot in the shape of a smiling tomato named “Gustino”. This easily recognisable symbol was displayed on the menus of 1,500 restaurants in France, allowing customers to identify the dishes that comply with the rules of a varied, balanced diet.

Following the pilot programme in France, Edenred wished to adapt and expand the programme to other European countries, developing it so that it becomes accessible to a larger number of consumers meeting their dietary needs. For this purpose, Edenred called on specialists with political, economic, social and medical expertise to advise further on workplace interventions, initiating a European wide project.

A public-private consortium was created in six countries together with nutritionists, Public Authorities and Universities. FOOD meets the requirements of the EU action programme laid down by the European Commission in the area of health and consumer protection, particularly in its fight against obesity. **The FOOD partnership is highly committed to the achievement of these objectives.**

The project targets restaurants and the workplace, both an essential part of personal well-being, quite often neglected. Improving the dialogue between the two provided an opportunity to influence the nutritional quality of the restaurants’ menus thus improving the lifestyles and habits of their customers.

Through a series of concrete actions planned over a two-year period between 2009 and 2011, the FOOD project has been seeking to:

- **Enable consumer choice through improved information and increased awareness, communicated via employers in companies to their employees to help them improve their diet during the workday.**
- **Improve the nutritional quality of the offer by working closely with restaurant managers and chefs.**

FOOD has allied with the European motto “United in Diversity” (www.europa.eu/abc/symbols) to promote balance eating, by adapting its campaign to the lifestyles and specific cultural habits of each of the six countries involved: Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden.

The project, run in parallel in all the six countries, has a common basis but set different targets for each partner country. This allows for cultural variations in the local situations and for differences resulting from existing local health promotion campaigns. The experts involved are able to analyse and centralise the best practices from each member country, giving added value to the recommendations that are then implemented by the various institutions at work on the project.

The Partners

Based on a public-private partnership, the richness of the FOOD project lies in the complementary skills and expertise of its participants. The consortium is made up of 25 partners whose contribution is indispensable in designing and implementing the programme.

The consortium comprises of the following members

Main partner




Edenred is the world leader in prepaid corporate services, with 34,5 million users and 1,2 million affiliated service providers worldwide, who are part of Ticket Restaurant® system. The company is attempting to make the most of this unique cooperation between the private and public sectors, using its core business to globally promote beneficial public policy objectives amongst very specific target groups that are difficult to reach. Meal vouchers can act as a launch pad for effecting a change of employee food and lifestyle habits. Furthermore, the project is in perfect harmony with Edenred's stated corporate social responsibility goals, of which access to balanced nutrition is a key priority. The main partner is responsible for the coordination of the project and for the dissemination of the information and results.

Associated partners

Nutritionists, Public Authorities and Universities make up the body of associated partners in the FOOD project. They play a significant role in the various project phases according to their expertise and skills and act as a guarantee to the project's ambitious high quality results and considerable added value.

Collaborating Partners

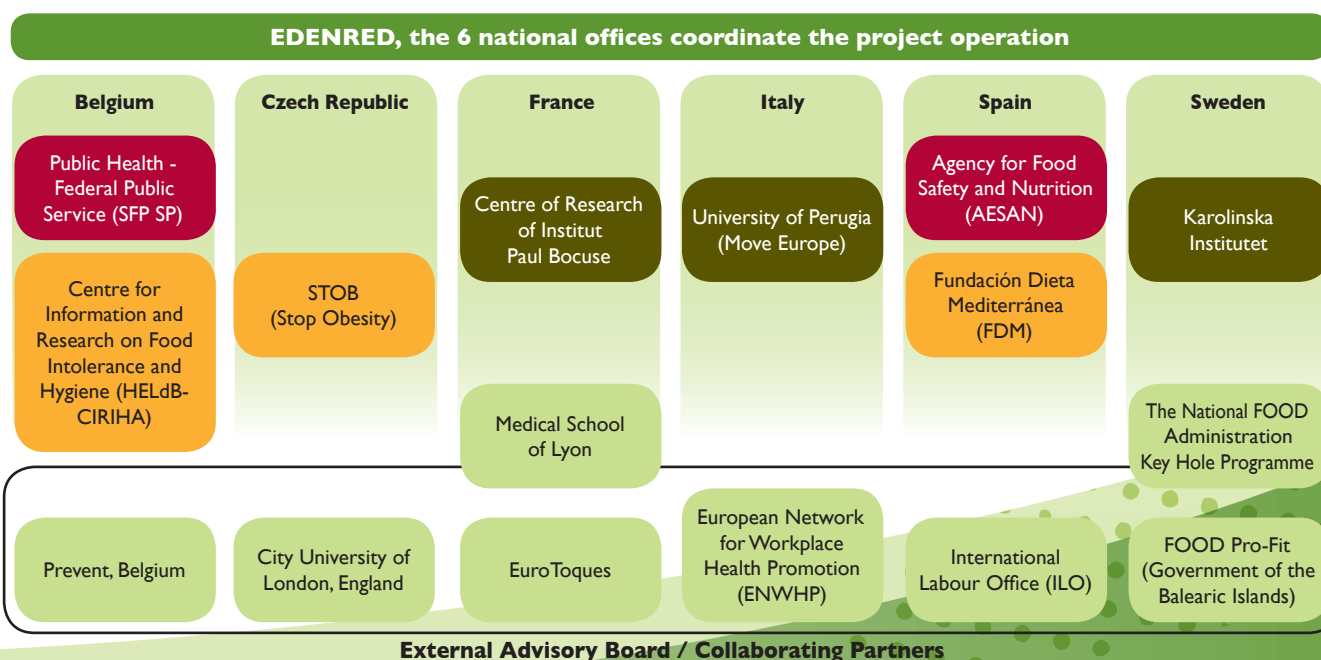
Collaborating Partners form the External Advisory Board of experts on the project. As public and private consultants, their role is to:

-  **Analyse the pilot programmes and the results of the actions undertaken.**
-  **Share ideas and contribute specific expertise.**
-  **Offer advice and recommendations, with an emphasis on best practices.**

All along the project, new collaborating partners have joined the Consortium: Agriculture Ministry in France, Generalitat de Catalunya, Guidelines for the Prevention of Obesity at the Workplace (GPOW) and NutriChallenge.

Partners

 Academies
  Public Health Ministries
  Nutritionists
  Collaborating Partners



The first stages of the programme

The project was launched in 2009. The first course of action was decided upon after identifying the needs and expectations from employees and restaurant staff. This was done by consolidating results from existing initiatives, conducting a survey and a qualitative study of restaurants and their attitudes toward healthy food. The first assessments were done on a national scale and later collated to create cross-project tools.

A detailed inventory of existing programmes related to nutritional interventions was first conducted. This review of existing programmes was carried out in order to try and understand what has been done so far in the various countries regarding interventions to promote healthy eating through a work setting. The focus of the review, were initiatives targeting balanced food in restaurants and for employees in a company setting. It focused especially at existing programmes in the six partner countries and where relevant, further countries were covered such as: Hungary, Canada, Chile and Switzerland.

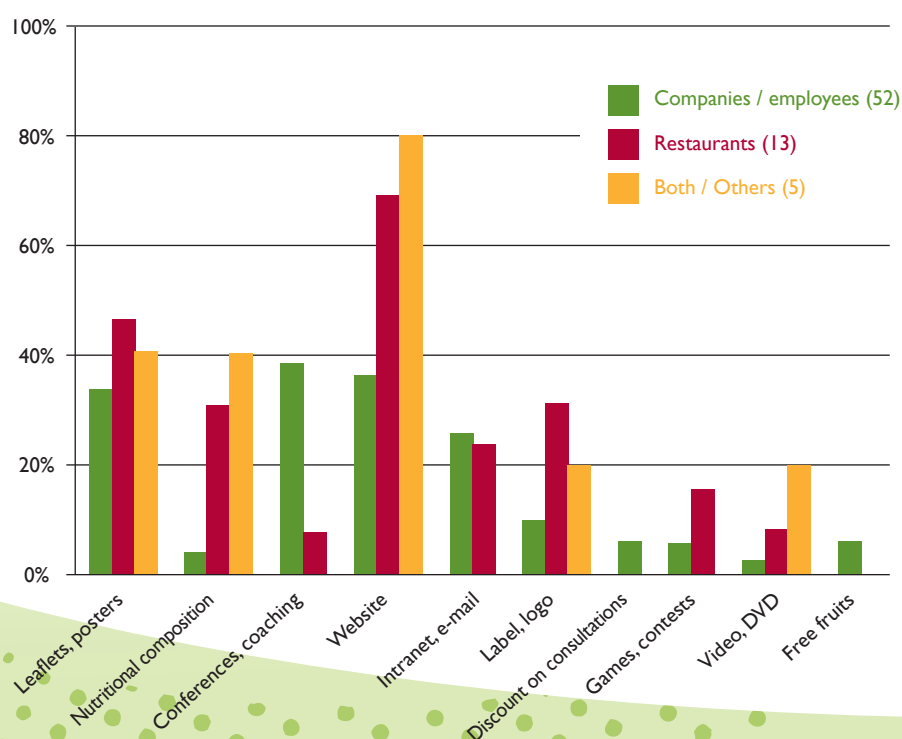
70 programmes matched the review criteria and were entered into the study. In these categories:

- ▶ **Programmes that aimed to increase participants' level of awareness in relation to a particular health area. In these cases, participants were expected to make changes in health behaviour as a result of increased awareness.**
- ▶ **Programmes that aimed to directly change the health behaviour of the employees using a variety of interventions such as skills training and self-help.**
- ▶ **Programmes that promoted a sustainable, healthy lifestyle through creating a workplace environment that supports and encourages healthy food choices.**

Out of those 70 programmes, 52 targeted employees, 13 targeted restaurants and 5 related to both or had other target audiences. Quite often the projects reviewed used similar methods of engagement such as: health fairs, educational classes and health assessments coupled with digital and printed promotional material. On the whole there was a lack of sufficient evaluation and even in the programmes that were evaluated (only 53%), this was not done in a rigorous enough way.

Operational conclusions from the review were: to offer a free programme open to all in order to have the greatest impact; launch a website, as this seems to have been a commonly chosen tool as were other visual and oral communication methods that were considered (see diagram).

Communication tools



Following the review, a survey was launched, with two questionnaires: one targeted at restaurants (5,000) and the other at employees (52,000). The survey was conducted in each of the participating countries by Edenred, designed by the Information and Research Center about Food Intolerances and Hygiene (CIRIHA) and the Institute Paul Bocuse and later analysed by the Institute Paul Bocuse, in France.

The results of the surveys for **both target groups (employees and restaurants) have been analysed and have helped in identifying the needs and defining the following messages to guarantee the success of the project:**

The messages should be **original** (to avoid a feeling of “d  ja vu”), **remain positive** (give suggestions rather than instructions), **adapted to each culture and habits and to the different target audience** (waiters, chefs, restaurants owners, customers, employers, employees, occupational health professionals, trade unions), and **use as many channels of communication as possible**. It could also be the opportunity to raise awareness regarding physical activity.

Findings from the restaurant survey make it clear that there is a need to demonstrate that changes can be made with little effort and do not require massive changes, to comply with the guidelines. Restaurants need to be convinced that by making changes to their modes of cooking they are responding to a growing demand from their customers.

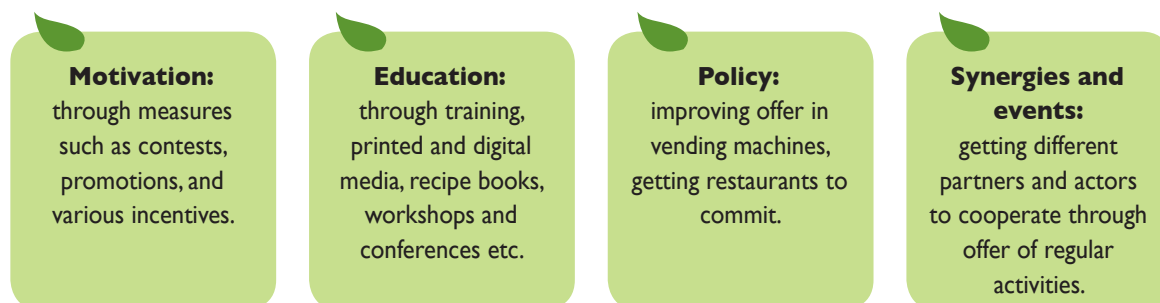
As for the employers, the results emphasise the importance of introducing them to the goals of the project. They, together with HR managers and occupational health professionals need to see the potential benefits of the project before making a long-term commitment.

The surveys have identified barriers to change from customers and restaurants alike, which relate to the often negative image of healthy food. **The main barriers identified were:**

- 1. Healthy food is more expensive, takes more time and is more complicated to prepare.**
- 2. The food is not tasty, rather like a type of diet.**
- 3. Balanced food is not part of traditional cooking and is rather a passing trend.**

These results demonstrate that there are many myths and misconceptions regarding balanced food, which need to be taken into account if the project is to change cooking and eating habits.

Four areas of action were identified:



In parallel with the quantitative survey, a qualitative restaurant study has been conducted in 2009. This survey was conducted in twelve countries and five restaurants were chosen in each country. The aims of the survey were to understand how and why chefs cook the way they do, and what could trigger a change in attitude. The next stage was to try and convince restaurants that cooking healthily has many benefits with no additional costs.

The 45 interviews led in the European countries have shown that there is a real positive attitude toward balanced, healthy eating mostly thanks to an increase in customer demand for these types of food. Giving an answer to this demand is the first to motivate the restaurants owners’ to commit to change.

Nevertheless, there is confusion concerning the definition of balanced food. Many interviewees think that their “cuisine” is already healthy, traditional and/or natural (“Mediterranean food is healthy”, “olive oil is healthy”, etc.) yet do not pay attention to the use of fat, or cooking methods. These restaurants were more often found in the south of Europe.


Following a consolidation of the results from all surveys, experts outlined recommendations at national scale for restaurants and for employees.

A few recommendations for each of the target groups were agreed as common across the project and the rest remained specific to each country, to match cultural preferences.


To avoid the creation of multiple health messages, the project does not mean to create new national recommendations but rather build on existing national plans thus helping each target group apply these during the working day.

Here are some selected **recommendations for restaurants** to improve the nutritional content of the dishes on offer without additional costs. The country where the recommendation is applied is written below.




 **Taste the food before adding salt and/or try other condiments.**


Quite often people add salt without tasting the food first. This leads to unnecessary amounts of salt added which is unhealthy, the recommended daily intake for adults being no more than 6g (about one teaspoon).

 **Lower the use of fat and preferably use vegetable oils.**


Try and replace saturated fats (which can increase the risk of heart problems), with unsaturated ones - such as olive oil - to improve blood lipid levels.

 **Eat at least 5 portions of fruit/vegetables per day.**


The recommended minimum daily intake of fruit and vegetables in most countries is 400g, or 5 portions. It is important to consider this when choosing a lunch meal, as this will contribute toward the daily consumption.

 **As a dessert, choose a fresh fruit based option and sometimes as an alternative, a dairy product.**

According to the country, dairy consumption recommendations vary.


 **Choose types of cooking that do not add too much fat (steaming, roasting, grill, etc.).**

To minimise the addition of fat, already present in many foods.


 **Choose water to accompany your lunch.**

Water is essential to the body. Consumption should be of 1,5 litres to 2 litres.


These 6 recommendations are common to the 6 countries.

 **I only have treats on special occasions.**


Belgium. Following a balanced nutrition does not mean frustration and completely avoiding sweets, cakes, crisps, etc., just having them in moderation.

 **Fruit or vegetables could help suppress hunger between main meals.**


Czech Republic. Snacks are not a problem. Simply choose healthy ones.

 **Why not choose fish as a main dish?
(The consumption of fish is recommended at least twice a week).**


France. The French recommendations are weekly based.

 **Do not consume too much bread, especially in between dishes and prefer whole bread.**

Italy. Grains are an important part of the diet, yet should not be excessively consumed.

 **Some days we could do without meat. The combination of legumes and cereals is a good alternative.**

Spain. Meat offers proteins but also fat.

 **Choose the Keyhole meal.**

Sweden. The Keyhole programme, well known to Swedish consumers, is a way for them to guarantee a healthier choice.

Here are some selected **recommendations for employees** in order to give them the keys to choose a more balanced meal at lunchtime or more generally during the working day. The country where the recommendation is applied is written below.

The Road Show

The FOOD project was launched to the public in October 2009 with a Road Show, which was the result of ten months of intensive work for all the partners. It represented the official launch of the project. The campaign was “kicked off” with a special double-decker bus visiting the six countries participating in this European project. The journey started in Paris and then continued on to Brussels, Stockholm, Prague, Milan and ended in Madrid. With the help of professionals such as nutritionists, dieticians and chefs, the general public together with employees and guests from the restaurant sector, had the opportunity to learn about the aims of the project. The bus raised interest in all city centres and attracted many visitors and journalists.

The main activities that took place in the various cities were:



- Short seminars on healthy food.
- Advice from nutritionists on eating habits.
- Chef demonstrations and preparations of easy to cook, healthy dishes.
- Measurement of BMI and fat/muscle/water in the body calculations against one's ideal weight.
- Use of an overweight simulator with a 10kg belt to find out what it feels like to weigh an extra 10kg.
- Quizzes, tests and advice about healthy food, understanding food labels and the nutritional value of foods.



The daily sessions discussed healthy eating, balanced diet and how eating lunch in a restaurant should be compatible with a healthy lifestyle within the context of professional life.

“The road show was the first unveiling of the project to the target audiences”, says Nathalie Renaudin, Public Affairs Director and in charge of the FOOD programme. “The long line outside the bus in Spain was truly memorable; it was incredible to see so many people waiting to participate in the bus activities and it demonstrated the real interest of the public. Conferences on balanced nutrition in Belgium and Italy also gathered many visitors. The vegetable garden set out in Paris was marvellous. In addition, in the Czech Republic, the shows organised by comedians as well as the activities to measure the BMI and the high cholesterol were really successful. In almost all countries, chefs used a very original approach to address balanced food. They performed cooking demonstrations and managed to show how easily taste and pleasure can be combined with balance.”



Employee and restaurant tools

In the first stage of the project, a set of tools was created to provide practical advice and assist in implementing the recommendations to encourage healthy choices.

The tools were aimed at restaurant professionals (chefs, owners, staff) and at the employees in companies. All the tools shared the same objective of providing practical guidelines, simple to understand and to follow, respecting the professional constraints of the restaurant owners and chefs and trying to help people cook healthier at home. The tools aimed at the employees are to be used when eating out, but can help in forming lifelong healthy behaviours.

The communication tools can be divided into digital and printed material. The digital tools were similar in all countries, adapted to local cultural differences. The printed material was more individualised and each member country chose the ones most suitable to its needs. In the next few pages is a **selection of some of the material produced for employers/employees and for the restaurants.**



Website

The main tool used for communication was the website, where all tools are downloadable and free of charge. A cross-European version was created in all the languages spoken in the six countries plus English (www.food-programme.eu). Some countries have created their own site.



Leaflet

A leaflet was printed in a standard format for all countries.



Set of cards

A set of cards explaining each of the ten recommendations has been created to convey the messages of the project to the employees.

A certificate is sent to all restaurants committing to deliver the recommendations on entering the FOOD network.

A short film explaining the recommendations is available on a Belgian site, on: www.explania.com/fr/animations/detail/une-alimentation-saine



Certificate



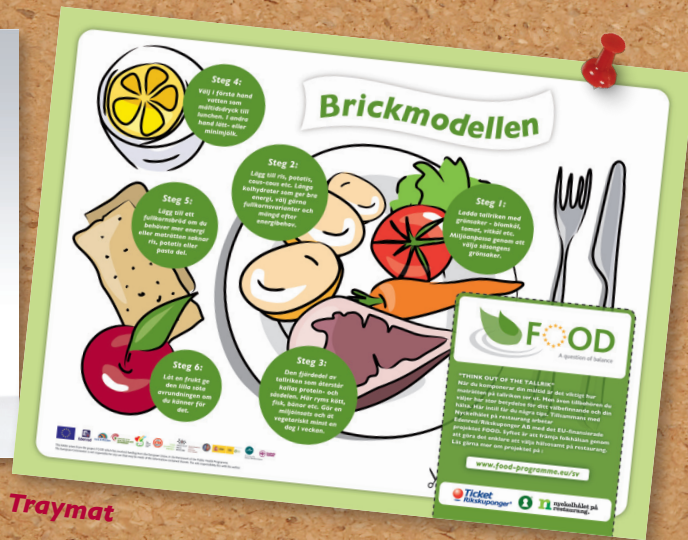
Website: FOOD cooking game

The FOOD cooking game is available on the website. The game tests the user's culinary knowledge in preparing a few balanced recipes. Chefs from the six participating countries have put together the recipes, and the objective is to prepare them correctly in the shortest possible time.

One of the best received tools so far has been the "Seasonal fruit and vegetable calendar". It has been produced in six languages.



Calendar



In Sweden, the FOOD project has joint forces with the national Keyhole programme; a network of dedicated restaurants that follow the national health recommendations. The tools designed are specific to the Swedish customers.

Traymat



The Spanish guide to the employees explains all the recommendations in detail and provides tips and examples.

Guide with recommendations



Meal voucher booklet

The FOOD project was advertised on the Meal voucher booklet in the different countries (examples from the Czech Republic and France).



Newsletter

Equilibra - the Spanish customer newsletter has a fixed section on healthy eating and the Italian newsletter discussing issues of health and nutrition. The target audiences of such newsletters are Ticket Restaurant® customers = more than 184,500 companies in the six countries.

Evaluation of the employee and restaurant surveys

In 2010, a second survey was conducted in each of the six participating countries towards 52,000 employees and 5,000 restaurants. Two questionnaires were designed by the Karolinska Institute and the Paul Bocuse Institute, with the results analysed by the latter. Employees were recruited by email to participate in an online survey. In total, 6,185 employees responded. Restaurant owners were also contacted via email (apart from Belgium, where part of the survey was conducted over the phone). A smaller number of restaurateurs responded - 325 in total - which suggests that email may not be a good communication tool in this case and that caution should be taken when drawing conclusions from the restaurant survey.

Employee survey results

The respondents were made up of 31% men and 69% women. Almost half of the sample (49.3%) consisted of employees aged 35 to 50 years. The age ratio varied across the different countries. The Czech and Swedish samples consisted of a higher proportion (46%) of respondents older than 50 years.

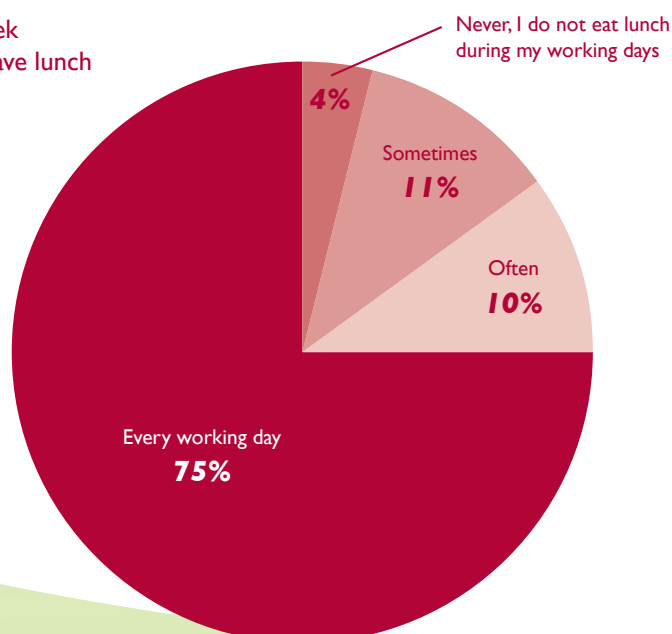
According to the health perception of the respondents, 58% perceived that they ate rather healthily. This corresponds with the BMI analysis according to which 43% of respondents were overweight or obese. On the whole, greater proportion of the Spanish, Swedish and Italian respondents tended to perceive their diet to be healthy, compared to the rest of the sample.

Choosing from a list of 7 descriptions of balanced food, 73% of respondents chose “balanced food” to mean: varied food in moderate amount eaten in a nice environment. “Eating pleasant food while at the same time protecting your health” was the second most popular choice.

Familiarity with health programmes and the FOOD project

The majority (65%) of respondents in all countries were not aware of programmes promoting healthy or balanced food, but most of these respondents said they would like to get information about them. A total of 19% of respondents had seen the FOOD logo, but only 3% also claimed to be familiar with it. This represents 170 employees who claimed to have been familiarised with the project mainly through internet based materials (such as the FOOD website, company intranet, email, social networks). Those who were familiar with the FOOD project demonstrated good knowledge of its recommendations and claimed it was the captive message that most caught their attention in it. Taking into consideration the time frame and the type of respondents, the results were received as encouraging by the External Advisory Board members. The next surveys, foreseen under the FOOD programme are expected to provide more information about the awareness, understanding and use of the information to improve the nutritional quality of meals eaten at lunchtime.

How many times per week do you take a break to have lunch during your working day?



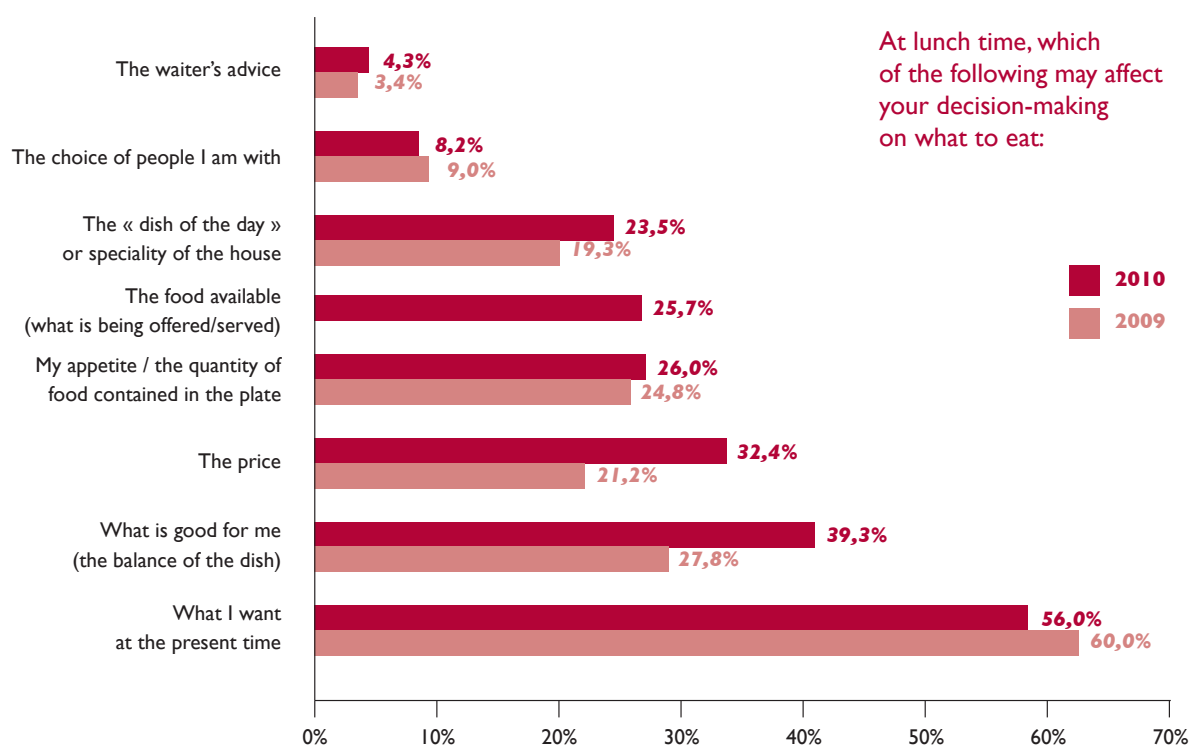
Lunch habits

75% of respondents took a lunch break every day. This was down from the 78.8% who participated in the 2009 survey.

In all countries, over 67% of respondents reported going to at least one type of restaurant; most of them in Spain (88%). The main reason given for not eating in a restaurant was bringing food from home. Not having a restaurant or cafeteria in proximity of the office and not having the time to go out were the other main reasons given.

Quick service was the main factor in choosing a venue, for those going out to eat in a restaurant. Offer of varied meals and being close to the office were the next important criteria. The price was fifth on the list followed by the nutritional quality of the food on offer. The least important factors were staff knowledge and willingness to help with meal choice and the availability of printed nutritional information.

The main factor in choosing what to eat remains to be the customer's desire for certain type of food. This is, however, slightly less significant than in the 2009 results. A balanced dish was the second most important factor (39.3%); up from 2009 by 11.5%.



Restaurant survey results

The number of respondents in each country was too small to allow for reliable per-country analysis of the results, and the data was therefore pooled. In this survey, like in the employee survey, the majority of respondents were aged between 35 and 50 years.

In all restaurant types surveyed, the majority of the clientele (82.5%) were workers/professionals. 64% of the restaurants offered a special lunch deal (such as dish, menu or special offer). A fixed menu was offered in 57% of those offering a special lunch deal.

Familiarity with health programmes and the FOOD project

As with the employee survey, the majority of respondents (70.5%) were not aware of a programme promoting healthy or balanced food, but 51.4% would be open to learning more about them.

31% of the respondents had seen the FOOD logo or material, but only 10% were familiar with it. This represents 32 respondents for whom the captive message had been the main thing that caught their attention. Most of the 32 respondents had used the FOOD website to familiarise themselves with the programme. Only 10 of the 32 restaurants had actually used any of the project tools (marketing and educational material), with only four claiming to have noticed any benefits to staff or clients from use of these tools.

Promisingly, 24% of the restaurants admitted to noticing an increase in both the demand and sales of healthier meals and the demand for smaller portion sizes.

The evaluation of the “mystery visits” (unannounced restaurant visits) in 150 restaurants (25 restaurants per country) within the FOOD network

To become acknowledged as a “FOOD restaurant” a country-specific number of recommendations must be followed in the applicant restaurant (all of the recommendations, 7 out of 10, or less). Recruited via email (Italy), video-emailing (France), door to door contact (Belgium and Czech Republic) or taking advantage of existing nutritional schemes (Spain and Sweden), a network of FOOD restaurants was established in each country.

The FOOD network restaurants were actively working towards making the offer meet the demand, to create more demand for balanced meals among their customers through awareness building with the help of the FOOD marketing and educational tools.

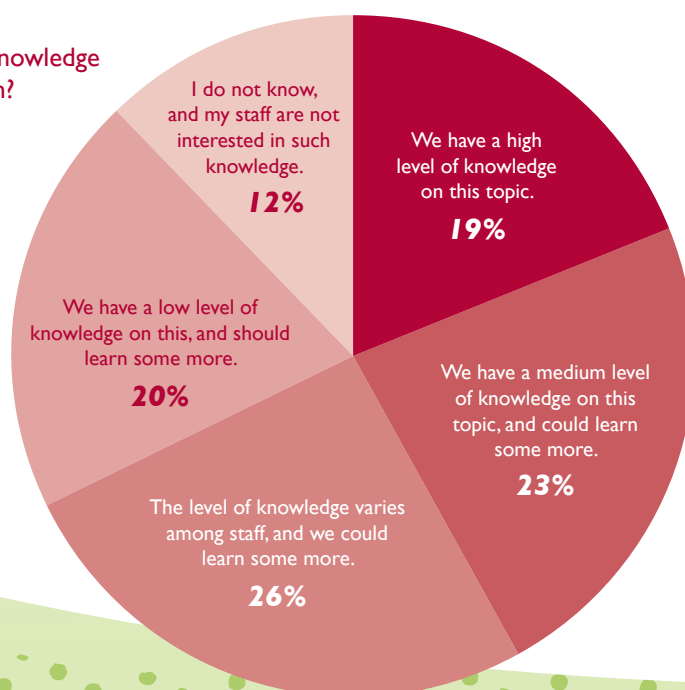
At the end of the project, after the communication campaign had been running for a few months, more than 1,900 restaurants had joined the FOOD network.

A report of the unannounced visits that took place in March-April 2011 draws a similar picture across the different countries. Most restaurants visited are independently run. FOOD material was not always available, possibly because of individual decorative style. This however did not have an impact on the extent to which the recommendations were carried out in the meal provision.

Based upon the findings, the main point, which should be improved, relates to restaurant staff. This evaluation suggested that although the restaurant owner had engaged in the FOOD programme, the content of the recommendations had not been explained to all of the staff, and therefore, some of the recommendations were not always applied throughout the service (from cooking to meal service). This has been caused by frequent staff turnover and future tools created could assist in better familiarising staff with the programme and its aims.

On a promising note, the reports from the countries showed that restaurants are adhering to national recommendations. Between a third and half of all restaurants visited, were carrying out at least 67% of the national recommendation, with the highest rates in Belgium and the lowest in Spain.

How would you rate your staff's level of knowledge on balanced nutrition?



Country relevant results and evaluation from the recent survey - new tools for the last stage of the project

Following the results of the second survey, it is clear that an effort should be made to increase the dialogue between the restaurants and the customers stressing the Offer and the Demand sides. The fact that more than ever, the choice of food depends on its nutritional quality and that unless made available, the trend in employees bringing food from home will continue to increase, has to be communicated to the restaurants. This should help them overcome the two main barriers identified in creating healthier dishes, time and budget.

The countries where a national scheme exists (Keyhole in Sweden, PNNS in France and Belgium, and NAOS in Spain) have identified the need to further the contact with these schemes and align the recommendations to those already in the public awareness, even if this implies a slight change in the focus of the goals.

Below are a few examples of country actions for the second campaign of communication.

Belgium

A Shopping memo has been created to remind employees how to follow recommendations when buying food (quantities of dairy products, vegetables, etc.), with a calendar of seasonal fruit and vegetables on the other side. The questionnaire results showed that many Belgians bring their lunch to work and such a tool complements this trend.



Shopping memo

Czech Republic

The partners participated in several press conferences to raise awareness about the FOOD project. In addition, further engagement with existing national schemes have been formed to align the recommendations to those already in the public awareness to raise the profile of the FOOD project.

France

For its second campaign, France has adapted tools created in Belgium in 2009, adjusting them to French recommendations. The results were the production of two sets of cards and a poster.



Set of cards





Meal voucher



Window sticker



Table talker

Italy

Following the results of the evaluation questionnaire, regarding the advantage of using the meal voucher as a communication tool to employees, it has been decided that the ten recommendations would be displayed from April 2011 to February 2012. One detachable healthy advice in the meal voucher booklet would be available each month.

Spain

A window sticker has been created to indicate a restaurant is part of the FOOD network. It also highlights the close relationship between the Gustino label and the FOOD European programme.

Sweden

Swedish wished to increase the dialogue between the customers in a restaurant environment. They have designed "table talkers" that mean to encourage discussions around the table on food related topics. Initially, 5 "table talkers" are produced in the following topics:

- Hunger and satiety
- The different and sometimes confusing health messages
- What is needed for human energy/initiative/power
- Distillation of all the good advice into one super advice
- Salt

The future of FOOD

At the end of the two years in which the project has been running, the partners who are committed to its goals have decided to take advantage of its achievements and create the FOOD programme. The programme will enable the consortium to grow to include new partners and encourage more countries to become involved.

The latest country to join FOOD in its new phase is the Slovak Republic. It has joined in February 2011, launching a set of tools adapted to its national specifications. The Slovak Public Health Authority has provided the nutritional recommendations and Edenred Slovakia has redesigned existing tools while also adding new tools, such as a dedicated Facebook page.

One of the strengths of the project has been the partnership formed between the public and private members of the consortium. Any new countries joining who are interested in the methodology and objectives of the FOOD programme will ultimately benefit from this partnership.





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