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RESEARCH TENDER CALL



TENDER INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Project Reference No.: 02-2023

Project Title: Modelling Cost-Effectiveness of Overweight and Obesity Prevention Policies on the island of Ireland


1. Objective/Knowledge Gap

This project aims to evaluate the cost effectiveness and equity of a range of current and planned obesity prevention policies and interventions (both regulatory and program-based interventions, both private and public including public-private partnerships - PPPs) on the island of Ireland to identify the most impactful cost-effective, implementable and acceptable policy options to prevent overweight and obesity across a range of settings. The priority assigned to overweight and obesity in public policy should include estimates of the incremental costs and benefits of interventions to prevent and/or manage overweight and/or obesity (1). Informed government action requires reliable comparative evidence on the costs and benefits of various policy options (2, 3) . This project sets out to generate evidence to inform policies and interventions on the island of Ireland and to answer the question:

"What are the most impactful, cost-effective, equitable and acceptable implementable policy and programme options to prevent overweight and obesity across a range of settings and what partnerships and approaches are best?"

2. Background

The current global obesity epidemic has significant negative health and economic consequences. Research in 2012 estimated the costs associated with current levels of excess body weight in adults on the island of Ireland at (€1.64 billion) (4) while the total lifetime cost of childhood overweight and obesity on the island was estimated to cost €7.2 billion in 2017 (1). In addition to the economic burden, the health and societal burden

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associated with overweight, and obesity is unsustainable. Addressing this problem requires a comprehensive societal response, including implementation of a suite of multi-sectoral government policies, programmes and interventions. Many effective policy and intervention options exist to deal with the rising obesity burden and a rich set of policy actions were included in the recent obesity policies on the island of Ireland(5, 6).


3. Approach

It is proposed that the aims of the project will be achieved through a mixed methods approach from a multi-disciplinary team with skills and knowledge ranging from economics to public health nutrition. It is expected that the researchers will intentionally integrate or combine these methods to draw on the strengths of each e.g., allow one method to inform the other and allow one method to provide deeper insights into the findings of another, so equity issues should be balanced with cost effectiveness, long-term versus short-term gains against costs of implementation as well as the practical issues of acceptability and implementation. These latter issues should be tested or validated with a group of policy experts. It is anticipated that some of the modelling may need to be informed by a public health precautionary principle.

4. Technical Specification

(a) Scope of research

- This research will focus on obesity prevention policies and interventions on the island of Ireland that include a nutrition and/or physical activity component.
- Different approaches, programmes and policies, in both Ireland and Northern Ireland should be contrasted and compared.
- The focus will be on the assessment of cost-effectiveness, and this will require the use of consistent, rigorous methods for the technical cost-effectiveness analyses (including extensive uncertainty analyses), alongside analyses of key implementation considerations relevant to policy decisions (strength of evidence, equity, acceptability, feasibility, and sustainability).
- It is anticipated that existing research should form the basis of the above, and that new research is not required.
- Modelling of costs to show long-term health and economic benefits may however be necessary.
- The approach used should consider the methods and criteria for intervention used by other studies in this area including ACE (Assessing Cost-Effectiveness) of

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Obesity Prevention Policies in Australia (2018) (2), the OECD Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyles: Best Practices in Public Health (3) and the OECD Health Policy Studies The Heavy Burden of Obesity the economics of prevention (7) and others. These methods need to be contextualised for the island of Ireland, e.g., the Australian star rating system.

- **The final approach should include** a 'testing' or validation of the results with a group of policy experts and entrepreneurs from industry, NGOs (such as the Irish Heart Foundation) and formal policy makers in government. This could take the form of a Delphi survey or focus groups. The purpose is to test the acceptability and practical implementation of the findings from the first stage of the research.
- The research should be collaborative across a number of relevant disciplines including health economics modelling, health policy, public health nutrition and other relevant fields as this is an emerging, trans-disciplinary field.

It should be noted that safefood is not an active participant in the project and sole responsibility lies with the successful tenderer

(b) Literature review


The literature review should include peer reviewed publications and a search of the grey literature including government and other organisation reports, and conference proceedings etc. A strong emphasis on systematic reviews is encouraged (8-11). Detail must be provided in regard to how the literature review will be conducted. structured and completed along with quality assurance mechanisms e.g., review by more than one researcher, inclusion/exclusion criteria.

(c) Qualitative and quantitative research

A full justification and rationale for the proposed methodology and analytical approach will be required. It will be necessary to indicate for all aspects of the project how the proposed data will be collected, analysed and reported. The research should be mixed in nature.

(d) Outline of proposed data sources

For this study, different data sources will be required. The researcher must enumerate the sources they intend to use and demonstrate access and experience in the use of the proposed data sources, as well as the relevant permissions to do so. In terms of existing

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research it will be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure permission or that the data is open access.

(e) Analysis

A detailed methodology must be provided on how the data sources are going to be utilised, analysed and interpreted to meet the objectives of the project. This includes details on the 'testing' phase detailed above.

(f) Data handling and Reporting

- The contractor will submit to **safefood**, on a six-monthly basis, an interim report containing details of the progress for each deliverable of the project.
- The contractor is responsible for collating all results and a final report will be submitted to **safefood** on completion of the study.
- All forms, documentation and electronic files must be retained by the contractor for **safefood** for a period of seven years in case of issues arising after the completion of the research.


(g) Quality assurance

- Ethical approval will be an essential component where data collection from participants is involved.
- The contractor will use validated methods where applicable and will apply best practice quality controls to approaches.
- To ensure transparency and reproducibility, all data sources used in the research must be specified, and all data used must be explicitly specified and justified.
- **safefood** may visit the contractors during the course of the research to assess how the work is being carried out.

5. Proposed Activities/Deliverables

The outcomes from this research will include:

- Data on the cost effectiveness of policies and interventions to prevent overweight and obesity on the island of Ireland and key implementation considerations relevant to policy decisions such as strength of evidence, equity, acceptability, feasibility, and sustainability.
- A breakdown of policy interventions and cost based on a typology such as that in the ACE report from Deakin University i.e. regulatory in nature, programme based or

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public private partnerships (PPPs) and foci such as nutrition, physical activity or eco-nutrition based.

- Recommendations on the cost effectiveness of preventing overweight and obesity through a different range of policies and interventions.
- Dissemination event to communicate the findings to stakeholders on the island of Ireland.
- Submission, on a 6-monthly basis, of interim reports on progress.
- Analysis of the final dataset, collation of the results and a final report to be submitted to **safefood** at the end of the 18-month study period.

6. Evaluation of Tenders

Tender bids will be evaluated according to the quality of proposals and applicants using the following criteria:

Quality of the proposal:

- ✓ Anticipated deliverables.
- ✓ Research method and facilities.
- ✓ Value for money.
- ✓ Potential for application.
- ✓ Work plan, including the overall timeframe.

Quality of Applicants:


- ✓ Experience in subject area.
- ✓ Quality Assurance and Quality Control measures in place.

7. Duration of Project

Estimated duration of the project: Total of 18 months. A detailed timescale of research should be submitted by the applicant.

8. Tender Application Forms and Guidelines

The Tender Application Form and associated Guidelines can be downloaded from <https://www.safefood.net/research-tender-2023>. They can also be obtained by emailing research@safefood.net, quoting the project reference number **02-2023**. Alternatively, please contact **safefood** as per the details below.

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The closing date for receipt of applications by **safefood** is no later than **4pm on Thursday 27th April 2023**

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