

**World Health Organization Western Pacific Region
Healthy Cities Recognition 2014**

Protecting, promoting and supporting healthy diets: salt reduction

Background

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are a public health and developmental priority for the Western Pacific Region, with 75% of all deaths in the Region attributable to NCDs and with nearly half of the deaths occurring prematurely in people under 70 years old. The four main NCDs – cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes – have overtaken communicable diseases as the leading health burden in the Western Pacific Region.

One of the main common risk factors for these NCDs is unhealthy diet, specifically characterized by processed foods high in salt, sugar and fat. An important step in the prevention and control of NCDs is to promote a healthy diet by making healthy choices the easier choices for the population. On one hand, this involves providing individuals with the skills and resources to make healthier decisions. On the other hand, the physical and social environments where citizens work, learn and live should be conducive to health.

The Regional Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (2014-2020) recommended the reduction of salt intake and salt content of food, and the replacement of trans-fat in food with polyunsaturated fat, among others, as important, feasible and cost-effective interventions to prevent and control NCDs. To achieve this, it is critical to help consumers have healthier choices as easier choices. A partnership approach is thus key to success. The focus of this call for proposals is on interventions, which promote healthy diets by reducing the salt content of foods and increasing awareness of the health benefits of salt reduction to the public and other key stakeholders.



Recognition of Best Practice

Recognition is given to innovative approaches for promoting healthier dietary options, specifically focusing on salt reduction. Best practices are not limited to interventions supported by governments, policymakers and public health practitioners but include those implemented with private sector, civil society and community participation.

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