

**Target setting and voluntary actions for dietary salt reduction: Questionnaire for a company in
'Country name'**

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Our team

This study is performed by researchers at [the National Institute of Health and Nutrition \(NIHN\)](#) at the National Institutes of Biomedical Innovation, Health and Nutrition (NIBIOHN) and Shiga University of Medical Science in Japan. This work is part of the research project funded by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan that estimates public health and the economic effects of actions for reducing dietary salt intake through the promotion of food environment creation. The researchers are responsible for the questions asked in this study, and the questions do not necessarily represent the views of the Japanese government.

Instructions for completing this questionnaire

Excessive salt intake is one of the main dietary risk factors of non-communicable diseases. To address this nutritional problem, Japanese food companies are encouraged to voluntarily contribute towards dietary salt reduction in collaboration with academia, the government, and civil society. To help companies plan actions for salt reduction, we will develop a support guide based on the experiences of overseas companies. This study aims to investigate companies' target setting and efforts towards salt reduction, particularly in countries in which the government recommends voluntary actions (see Appendix A).

Structure of the questionnaire

Section A. Target setting and efforts towards salt reduction

We would like to ask about companies' four types of actions concerning salt reduction. The concepts behind the four types of action are described in Appendix B.

Section B. Background on actions towards salt reduction

We would like to ask about the background of the company's efforts towards salt reduction.

Tips for filling in the questionnaire

Input from representatives nominated by each company will assist in identifying the above information.

The representatives may need to liaise with colleagues across the business to complete the questionnaire.

After completing the questionnaire

Please send the completed questionnaire by email if you agree with answering this questionnaire. If you would like to send the questionnaire safely in any other way, please contact our help desk. We may contact you if we have any questions about your response.

Confidentiality and privacy

If you would like to provide information that is confidential and not for public release, we will respect the confidentiality of your company's information and will not disclose information beyond the research team. Please contact our help desk if you would like to discuss confidentiality issues and/or draw up a non-disclosure agreement.

The response data will only be used for study purposes, and results will be reported in an aggregated way. Data will be reported at the company level, and no personally identifiable information will be reported. Furthermore, the research team is willing to sign a non-disclosure or confidentiality agreement issued by your company. Original data will be kept securely in a password-protected encrypted file at NIBIOHN for at least five years after the publication of any reports or papers that arise from the study; the data will subsequently be destroyed.

The advantage of participating in this survey

We will feed back the results to your company before public release. The salt reduction approaches and the experiences of major food companies will be summarised; the research results will be utilised to support future strategies. The development of effective and high-quality policies aimed at improving population health is expected to have an economic spillover effect and help meet sustainable development goals.

Participating in the study and your right to withdraw from participation

You have a right to decide whether or not to participate in this research. You will not be disadvantaged by non-participation. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time before the reporting and publication of the research paper. If you decide to withdraw from this research, please notify the project manager. We will send you the withdrawal consent form.

Research timeline

Timeline	Research step
TBD 2024	A company representative completes the questionnaire.
About for one month	The research team receives the completed document from the companies and appropriately contacts company representatives to recheck the document.
March to April 2024	The research team shares the summary results with the representative.

If you have any questions, please contact our help desk: salt_survey_help@nibiohn.go.jp

Company information	
Company name	
Global or parent company	
Contact of representative	

A. Target setting and efforts towards salt reduction

We would like to ask you about the company's salt-reduction actions since 2015 when the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted. If the company conducts the action checkpoints below, please select 'yes' and fill in the specific actions in the 'Actions' column. Please select 'yes' even if the company is conducting a comprehensive activity – and not only salt-reduced actions – for nutritional improvement. Please add detailed references, e.g., annual report and website URL, in the footnote if they are available. Please use the 'Comments' if you have anything about which you would like to inform the research team. The action checkpoints are cited from the Business Impact Assessment —Obesity and the population-level nutrition tool (Sacks G et al. Obesity Reviews. 2019;20(S2):78–89).

A-1. Reformulation to reduce sodium content

No	Action checkpoints	Actions	Comments
1	Does the company generally publish a comprehensive set of commitments or objectives related to new product development and reformulate its existing products to reduce salt?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company pledged to reduce sodium by 2025 and 2030 in key product categories that are frequently consumed and are important contributors to sodium intake within their respective categories[1]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	E.g., We are proceeding with the strategy. Roughly 40% of key products have been reformulated to reduce sodium. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
2	Does the company use a system/ criteria (e.g., product classification system or nutrient profiling system) related to salt reduction (or not only salt reduction) to classify the healthiness of products for product development/ reformulation?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company uses nutrient profiles that are based on original nutritional criteria to evaluate the overall nutritional composition of all of our products. These profiles determine if and what type of nutrition or health claims are acceptable for these products.	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

No	Action checkpoints	Actions	Comments
		ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	
3	Does the company reduce the salt content in its prepackaged foods without including a nutrient content or health claim to target all consumers including those who are not interested in salt reduction?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company reduced the equivalent of **mg salt /100g from previous products for children without public disclosure and health claims over one year[2]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
4	Does the company utilise low-sodium salt substitutes (e.g., potassium salts)?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, to what extent does the company use salt substitutes? Please fill in the specific action. E.g., We use a salt substitute that includes 25% potassium chloride in A products. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
5	List other actions that the company takes.	☐ No ☐ Yes ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
	Please add lines if needed.	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

Please fill in available information, including issuing agency, title, URL: *** (access date: date). Please add the cell appropriately.

No1	ここをクリックまたはタップしてテキストを入力してください。
No2	ここをクリックまたはタップしてテキストを入力してください。

A-2. Food procurement and service policies

*Examples of public places are as follows: government offices, schools, childcare centres, nursing homes, hospitals, health centres, community centres, and seniors' centres.

No	Action checkpoints	Actions	Comments
1	<u>In the event that the recommended criteria for sodium content in food that is served or sold in public places* are indicated by the government</u> , does the company adopt the criteria for product development?	☐ No, ☐ Not Applicable ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company provides products that contain **mg/100g sodium or less in school canteens in accordance with government criteria. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
2	Does the company have a clear and specific commitment to increase the number/percentage of lower-sodium products in public places*?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company provides ** % lower-sodium products of the total products that we provide in canteens in community centres [3]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
3	<u>In the event that the company has its own lower-sodium and non-sodium-reduced products</u> , does the company ensure that lower-sodium products provided in public places are affordably priced, particularly compared with equivalent products that are non-sodium-reduced?	☐ No, ☐ Not Applicable ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company is ramping up efforts to make affordable lower-sodium products. Specifically, the price of low-sodium product A is the same as that of our general product B [2]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

No	Action checkpoints	Actions	Comments
4	Does the company utilise a system/ criteria (e.g., product classification system or nutrient profiling system) to classify the healthiness of products when considering food pricing, distribution, and/or availability?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Using a nutrient profiling system, we decide on food pricing, distribution, and/or availability based on common evaluation criteria for multiple products in the same category [4]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
5	List other actions that the company takes.	☐ No ☐ Yes ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
	Please add lines if needed.	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

Please fill in available information, including issuing agency, title, and URL: *** (access date: date). Please add the cell appropriately.

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No2	ここをクリックまたはタップしてテキストを入力してください。

A-3. Nutrition labelling/ Front-of-pack labelling (FOP)

No	Action checkpoints	Actions	Comments
1	Does the company use FOP labelling related to sodium content? Examples: understandable information (e.g., stars, traffic lights, and warning labels); symbols or logos that indicate healthy products; and numeric information on the levels of key nutrients.	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the type of FOP labelling the company uses. E.g., Our company uses the FOP icon to show energy content as either a percentage contribution to the national nutrition criteria or as an absolute quantity [1]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
2	If the government endorses voluntary FOP labelling related to salt reduction, does the company commit to adopting the government-endorsed FOP labelling scheme related to salt reduction?	☐ No, ☐ Not Applicable ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., The government recommends an algorithm to underlie FOP labelling schemes that are product group-specific or based on serving sizes. Our company uses FOP labelling that is aligned with salt reduction recommendations [2]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
3	Does the company use a system or criteria (e.g., product classification system or nutrient profiling system) to classify the healthiness of its products for the purposes of health and/or nutrition claims regarding salt reduction?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company labels lower-sodium cooked food products if they contain less than 3 g salt equivalent per 650 kcal in accordance with the original product classification system [3]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

No	Action checkpoints	Actions	Comments
4	List other actions that the company takes.	☐ No ☐ Yes ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
	Please add lines if needed.	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

Please fill in available information, including issuing agency, title, and URL: *** (access date: date). Please add the cell appropriately.

No1	ここをクリックまたはタップしてテキストを入力してください。
No2	ここをクリックまたはタップしてテキストを入力してください。

A-4. Marketing approach of products high in salt

Products high in salt: please follow the system or criteria for classifying the healthiness of products for product development or reformulation related to salt reduction, as answered in questions A-1 No.2. If the company does not have its own system or criteria, please follow the standards below that are recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

WHO global sodium benchmarks for different food categories. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240025097> (accessed Nov, 2023)

No	Action checkpoints	Actions	Comments
1	Does the company commit not to use fantasy, anime characters, celebrities, or sports athletes to market to children products high in salt?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company commits not to use talent (celebrities) to market frozen fried potatoes [1]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
2	Does the company commit not to attach premium offers (e.g., promotional toys, games, coupons, competitions) to market to children products high in salt?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company commits not to attach promotional toys when marketing potato chips [2]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
3	Does the company have a clear policy to reduce children's exposure through broadcast media (e.g., television and radio) to products high in salt? What age group does the company target?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company set time-based restrictions when marketing instant noodles based on peak viewing time for children, e.g., no advertising before 21:00 [3].	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

No	Action checkpoints	Actions	Comments
		ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。 Target age group E.g., Children aged 6–15 years. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	
4	Does the company have a clear policy to reduce children's exposure through non-broadcast media (e.g., websites, social media, print media, product placement, out-of-home marketing, and in-store marketing) to products high in salt? What age group does the company target?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company set restrictions for advertising instant noodles within a 1 km radius of the school [4]. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。 Target age group E.g., Children aged 6–15 years. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
5	List other actions that the company takes.	☐ No ☐ Yes ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
	Please add lines if needed.	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。	ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

Please fill in available information, including issuing agency, title, URL: *** (access date: date). Please add the cell appropriately.

No1	ここをクリックまたはタップしてテキストを入力してください。
No2	ここをクリックまたはタップしてテキストを入力してください。

B. Background of company efforts in salt reduction

Please fill in the background on the company's efforts in salt reduction.

B-1. Organisational structure for implementing efforts in salt reduction

Please answer whether the company implements the following: **1) a key decision-making person or department and/or 2) cooperation with a government or municipality**. If you select 'yes', please fill in the specific description.

A key decision-making person or department
☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., A final decision is made at an executive meeting. The executives approve the plan and receive an evaluation report on implementation to make sales decisions on reformulated products. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
Cooperation with a government or municipality
☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Our company has applied for and received a subsidy to reformulate products into healthy products. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

B-2. Measurement tool for assessing efforts in salt reduction

Please answer whether the company uses **any measurement tool and/or assessment criteria** for assessing its efforts in salt reduction. If you select 'yes', please fill in the specific description.

Measurement tools
☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., Number of sales of the target products; consumer research using an original questionnaire; a survey in collaboration with government and/or academic institutions; external evaluation ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。
Assessment criteria
☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, please fill in the specific action. E.g., the company decides to continue sales from x number of sales. ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

B-3. Setting salt levels in accordance with a global benchmark

1. WHO has published global benchmarks for sodium levels in foods across various food categories (WHO 2021). Does the company utilise these benchmarks to set salt levels in their products? Please select the most relevant of the choices.

- ☐ Utilise the benchmark
- ☐ Utilise part of the benchmark
- ☐ Do not utilise the benchmark
- ☐ Do not know

2. If you chose 'Utilise part of benchmark' or 'Do not utilise the benchmark' in the above question, please choose the closest reason from the following choices (multiple choices allowed).

- ☐ The benchmark level is too strict to use.
- ☐ The benchmark is not culturally applicable.
- ☐ The company uses the benchmark published by the national government.

(The publication name: [ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。](#))

(URL if applicable: [ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。](#))

- ☐ The company uses the original salt level setting.
- ☐ Other ([ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。](#))

B-4. Incentives for conducting salt reduction

1. Does the company pursue salt reduction from the point of view of Environmental, Social, & Governance (ESG), such as the assessment of [Access to Nutrition Index \(ATNI\)](#)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If 'yes', please provide details about the received (or expected) ESG incentives.

E.g., ESG investors place importance on a company's sodium reduction activities. Therefore, our company makes a strong effort to implement sodium reduction. We expect that the investment will be increased based on the Access to Nutrition Index's assessment of salt reduction.

ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

2. Does the company have any other incentives, such as economic incentives from the government, for conducting the sodium reduction initiative?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you selected 'yes', please provide details about the received (or expected) incentives.

E.g., The company receives financial support (USD ***) from the government when the company meets specific criteria for efforts in salt reduction.

ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

B-5. The difficulty in implementing sodium-reduction actions and solutions

1. Does the company have any experience with discontinuing lower-sodium products?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you selected 'yes', please provide the reason and the decision-making process.

E.g., Sales of the salt-reduced product X did not reach the annual target, and the Y department decided to discontinue sales. The Y department is the decision-making authority.

ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

2. Does the company have any barriers and enablers to sodium reduction?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you selected 'yes', please describe the barriers and enablers.

Barriers

E.g., No guidelines are available for salt reduction efforts. Therefore, we must plan independently, which can sometimes be time-consuming.

ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

Enablers

E.g., We established a team that specialises in salt reduction activities within the company.

ここをクリックしてテキストを入力してください。

Thank you for answering the questionnaire. Your input is much appreciated.
Please email the completed questionnaire to: **salt_survey_help@nibiohn.go.jp**

Appendix A: How companies are selected

This study selected 36 high-income countries in which the government recommends the following voluntary actions (WHO. WHO Global Report on Sodium Intake Reduction, 2023): 1) food reformulation to reduce sodium content, 2) food procurement and service policies, 3) nutrition labelling/ front-of-pack labelling (FOP), and 4) marketing approach of products high in salt (the checklist is referenced as ‘marketing restrictions’ and ‘media campaign’). This survey requests input from overseas companies that have experience with the best practice of salt reduction through the International Network for Food and Obesity/NCDs Research, Monitoring and Action Support ([INFORMAS](#)) and other networks. The INFORMAS is a global research network that monitors the actions of public and private sectors to create healthy food environments. The INFORMAS is active in over 60 countries. Drs YAMAGUCHI and NISHI are members of the [INFORMAS in Japan](#).

Table 1. The countries where the government recommends voluntary actions for salt reduction

Country	Area	Reformulation	Food procurement and service policies	Nutrition labelling/FOP	Marketing approach of products high in salt
Australia	WPR	✓	✓	✓	
Brunei Darussalam	WPR	✓	✓	✓	
New Zealand	WPR	✓	✓	✓	
Republic of Korea	WPR	✓			
Singapore	WPR	✓	✓	✓	
Austria	EUR	✓			
Belgium	EUR		✓	✓	
Croatia	EUR			✓	
Czechia	EUR	✓		✓	
Denmark	EUR			✓	✓
Estonia	EUR	✓			
Finland	EUR		✓	✓	
France	EUR	✓		✓	
Germany	EUR	✓		✓	
Greece	EUR	✓			
Iceland	EUR		✓	✓	✓
Ireland	EUR	✓			
Italy	EUR	✓		✓	
Lithuania	EUR	✓		✓	
Luxembourg	EUR			✓	
Malta	EUR	✓			
Netherlands	EUR	✓			✓
Norway	EUR	✓		✓	
Poland	EUR			✓	✓
Portugal	EUR	✓	✓		✓
Qatar	EUR		✓		
Slovenia	EUR	✓		✓	✓
Spain	EUR	✓	✓	✓	
Sweden	EUR	✓			
Switzerland	EUR	✓	✓	✓	
United Kingdom	EUR	✓		✓	
Barbados	AMR		✓		
Canada	AMR	✓			
Chile	AMR	✓			
United States of America	AMR	✓			
Uruguay	AMR	✓			

WPR: Western Pacific Region, EUR: European Region, AMR: Region of the Americas

Appendix B: The concepts behind the four types of action

The concepts behind the four types of action are described in Table 2.

Table 2: The concepts behind the four types of action

Action type	Concepts*
Reformulation to reduce sodium content	Lowering the sodium content of foods that are consumed frequently is one of the effective ways to reduce the population's sodium intake. Reformulation is conducted mostly against some processed food with high sodium content, such as bread, cereal and grains, processed meats, and dairy products.
Food procurement and service policies	The major action is to set nutrition criteria for food served and sold in public settings (a limit on the use of food typically high in sodium, a maximum permissible amount of sodium in a serving of food, or a prohibition against placing saltshakers on tables). These policies can cover the entire process of purchase, provision, distribution, preparation, service, and sale of food to ensure that each step meets healthy criteria.
Nutrition labelling/ Front-of-pack labelling (FOP)	Nutrition labelling policies and other measures can prevent labelling that is false, misleading, or deceptive or is likely to create an incorrect view about any characteristics of the product. The labelling policies include nutrient declarations on the back of the package and front-of-pack labelling. Front-of-pack nutrition labelling on pre-packaged foods contributes to increasing consumer awareness and enables consumers to make healthier choices, change purchasing intentions, and provide industry incentives to reformulate and produce healthier products.
Marketing approach of products high in salt	This action aims to encourage children not to be highly exposed to unhealthy foods and beverages. Consequently, the demand for unhealthy products will be expectantly decreased and the industry incentives to reformulate and market healthier products will be more required.

* The concepts are cited from the WHO global report on sodium intake reduction (WHO 2023). The concept of a 'marketing approach of products high in salt' is referenced as 'marketing restriction' and 'media campaign.' The concept of a 'Food procurement and service policies' is referenced as 'Public food procurement and service.'