

# EU Framework for National Salt Initiatives



High Level Group – Diet, Physical Activity and Health  
Platform for Action: Joint Session  
Brussels July 2, 2008

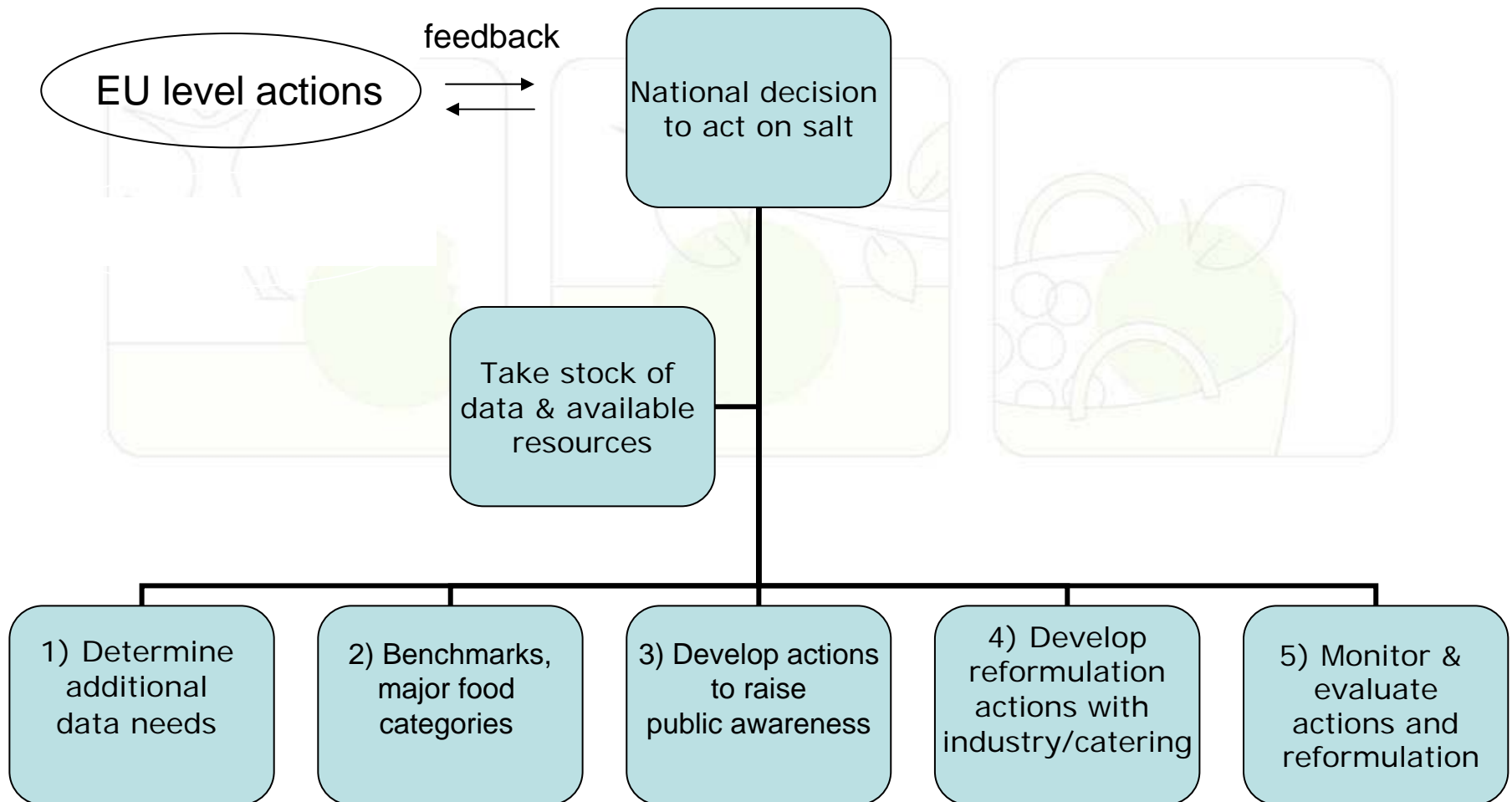
# Why a European framework?

- The overall goal is to contribute towards reduced salt intake at population level in order to achieve the national or WHO recommendations.
- Supporting and reinforcing national plans
  - Comparable progress across EU
  - Flexibility for Member States
  - Clear framework and coordinated messages for food industry across Europe
  - Generate momentum and measurable action<sub>2</sub>

# General principles

- 5 key elements, common minimum benchmarks, shared learning, building on the experience of Member States
- Involving stakeholders: engagement with stakeholders at European and national level
- Maximising impact
  - Food manufacturers should prioritise their products that have the largest market share.
  - Salt reduction to be delivered across the full range of food products from premium to economy items so that all population groups can benefit.

## 5 key elements: simultaneous and interconnected strands of national action

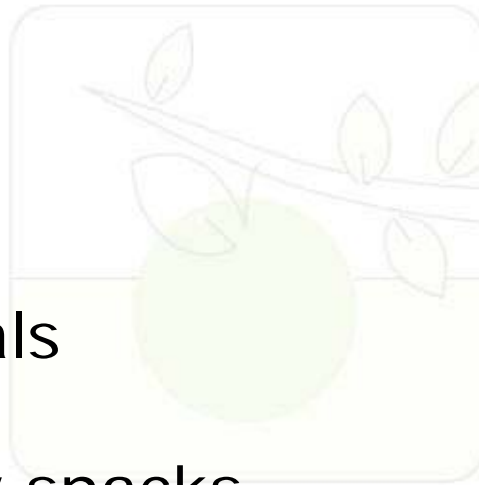


# EU benchmarks & food categories

- A common minimum European benchmark of 16 % salt reduction over 4 years has been established applicable to all products, restaurants, catering.
- 'salt' is used as an easily understandable term for the correct term 'sodium' which should be reduced in the diet  
(sodium x 2.5 = salt equivalent amounts)
- The baseline for the reformulation benchmarks are salt levels in 2008.
- 12 categories of food have been identified as priorities for action for salt reduction. Member States will select at least 5 categories for their national plan.
- Strategic plans with benchmarks to be published<sup>5</sup>

# Priority: 12 categories of food

- Bread
- Meat products
- Cheeses
- Ready meals
- Soups
- Breakfast cereals
- Fish products
- Crisps, savoury snacks
- Catering meals
- Restaurant meals
- Sauces, condiments and spices
- Potato products



# EU benchmarks & food categories

- Benchmarks for food categories that commonly represent major sources of salt in average diets
  - **Bread** **16 % in 4 years**
  - **Ready meals** **16 % in 4 years**
  - **Meat products** **16 % in 4 years**

*Acknowledging that sub-categories of meat may have different benchmarks, including reducing variations between similar products*
  - **Cheeses** **16 % in 4 years**

*Acknowledging that sub-categories of cheese may have different benchmarks, including reducing variations between similar products*
- Member States may set individual benchmarks particularly for sub-categories of bread/meat/cheese

## Lowest possible salt levels

- At least in the 4 food categories bread, ready meals, meat products and cheeses further work will be done to identify the lowest achievable salt levels ('best in class') at EU level.
- These lowest achievable levels will need to be revised over time.
- Member States may identify '*best in class*' products within further food categories.
- Food producers to be encouraged to move towards the '*best in class*' levels for all categories of food. If salt reduction reaches the current '*best in class*' this will be sufficient progress.
- Exceeding the 16 % target or improving the '*best in class*' levels is strongly encouraged.

# Raising public awareness

- National government led action
- Creates buy in from consumers, supports reformulation action
- Possible partnership with NGOs, industry, media, health sector, national platforms

# Monitoring

- Monitor
  - population salt intake
  - reformulation progress towards benchmarks
  - effectiveness of actions to raise public awareness
- **Member States responsibility,** various approaches possible, may be chosen according to national situation, options include:
  - Self reporting framework by industry
  - Monitoring salt content of foods, intake data
  - Awareness of consumers / behavioural change in consumers
  - Sodium excretion surveys

# Timeframe

- Achieve broad endorsement of vision with federations for locally produced products: by the end of 2008
- Member States need to have a monitoring approach in place by the end of 2008. The Salt Action Network will publish a standard framework with minimum data set for information collection and monitoring actions.
- Public awareness initiatives implemented by the end of 2009
- First progress / monitoring reports: by the end of 2009

# Supporting countries

- Italy
- The Netherlands
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Ireland
- Germany
- Spain
- Luxembourg

- Austria
- France
- The UK
- Finland
- Sweden
- Hungary
- Slovenia
- Norway