**WHO NPPM product evaluation guide:** how to evaluate suitability of products on the market or monitor product changes and compliance to legislation in your country.

Evidence of how many unsuitable food products for infants and young children (FIYC) are being sold in your country provides an advocacy platform from which you can lobby stakeholders (e.g. manufacturers/government) to improve the composition and marketing of FIYC.

Depending on your available time and resources, **one of three** product assessments may be undertaken:

1. Selected category evaluation: evaluate some or all products in a few categories
2. Rapid evaluation across all categories: evaluate 5 products from each category
3. Comprehensive product evaluation: assess all available products

**Step 1 – Option A:** Decide on one or several product categories to focus on (e.g. snacks, confectionery and/or drinks) and evaluate a specified number of products (e.g. 30) or as many as you can find on sale in several popular retail locations (this is likely to reflect products with greater market share and give an overview of products on sale).

**Step 1 – Option B:** Select 5 products from each NPPM product sub-category. Try to include a range of brands and product types and select products with a larger market share (i.e. large manufacturers). You may not be able to find 5 products for some categories (e.g. ingredients), just collect as many samples as you can find.

**Step 1 – Option C:** Identify as many FIYC as possible. Consider products on sale at different retailers (small and large retailers, health food shops, pharmacies, online etc.), published product portfolios of different local or international brands, products on sale different cities or locations of higher and lower economic status and any available sales data to help identify all FIYC.

**Step 1 – A, B & C:** Refer to Annex 1 below for sampling strategy and data collection considerations*.*

**Step 2:** Enter nutrient and other packet information on the online product assessment tool WEBSITE.

OPTION A: Enter data for products one-by-one

OPTION B: Download the product spreadsheet, enter all data, and upload to website

**Step 3:** Use the generated reports to assess product PASS/FAIL rates and note products that did not report sufficient information on the pack to allow full assessment.

**Step 4:** Report and publicise findings via media, social-media, to stakeholders, pressure groups and relevant policy makers or government (refer to Toolkit Audience document) to apply pressure for product improvements and raise awareness about unsuitable products. See example report formats provided below.

**Step 5:** Repeat evaluation annually/bi-annually to monitor changes. You can select the same or similar products for repeat assessment to examine whether specific improvements have been made in content or promotions of popular products or select different brands and products.

**Product categories and examples**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Product group** | **Code** | **Sub-category description** | **Details and examples** |
|
| **Dry cereals and starches** | 1 | Dry or powdered cereal/starch to be eaten or cooked with milk or water | To be prepared with milk (or equivalent non-sweet liquid) or water (or protein-free liquid) e.g. Instant porridge, muesli, baby rice, dry pasta. Includes plain fresh pasta etc. Excludes crackers/rusks etc. (Cat. 5.2) |
| **Dairy foods** | 2 | Dairy-based foods, desserts and cereals | The largest ingredient is dairy and fruit ≤5% e.g. Porridge, Rice pudding, Yogurt, Fromage frais, Custard. [If fruit content >5% use Cat.3.1] |
| **Fruit & vegetable purees/ smoothies and fruit desserts** | 3.1 | Fruit-containing product, including breakfast/ dairy | Any product containing >5% fruit1 (except dry cereals, low fruit dairy, or snacks) e.g. Apple puree, Fruit and yogurt, Fruit custard, Porridge with >5% fruit |
| 3.2 | Vegetable only product | Single or mixed vegetables or legumes e.g. Spinach & pea puree, Mashed potato & carrot. Excludes foods containing added starch/fat/dairy (Cat. 4.1] |
| **Savoury meals/ meal components: combinations of starches, vegetables, dairy and/or traditional protein2**  Traditional protein sources include any meat, offal, poultry or fish | 4.1 | Food WITHOUT protein or cheese named | Vegetables/legumes and/or cereals/starches. May contain a protein source, dairy or fats e.g. Vegetable rice, Lasagne, Pesto sauce for pasta |
| 4.2 | Food WITH CHEESE named but no protein | Cheese and no other proteins are in the product name e.g. Cheese pasta, Tomato & Mozzarella pasta sauce |
| 4.3 | Food with protein source NOT named first | Protein source is not the first named food, e.g. Pea & lamb curry, Tomato & Beef sauce for pasta |
| 4.4 | Food with proteinsource named FIRST | e.g. Rabbit & potato, Beef soup, Tasty chicken risotto, Chicken & cheese pasta, Beef sauce for pasta |
| 4.5 | Protein source is ONLY named food | Pureed cooked meat. May contain a small quantity of grain/starch not in product name e.g. ‘Rabbit’ or ‘Lamb’ with some added rice flour or cornstarch |
| **Snacks and finger foods** | 5.1 | Fruit | Fresh fruit or whole dry fruits or pieces e.g. plain dry apple slices or raisins. Excludes pulverised/pureed dry fruits (Cat. 7) |
| 5.2 | Dry or semi-dry snacks and finger foods | Any grain, starch, pulse/lentil or root vegetable snack such as cracker, bread, biscuit, pastry, cake or pancake etc. Includes rusks, crackers and biscuits to be eaten dry or pulverised with liquid |
| **Ingredients** | 6 | Ingredients | Ingredients for cooking or adding to food in small quantities e.g. olive oil, stock cubes |
| **Confectionery** | 7 | Confectionery | Chocolates, sweets, liquorice, marzipan, fruit chews3 etc. |
| **Drinks** | 8 | Drinks | Fruit juice and other sweetened or flavoured drinks.4 Excludes 100% fruit/vegetable puree, breast-milk substitutes or unsweetened milk/milk alternatives |

1 Notes on fruit: Tomatoes, avocadoes and coconut are not classed as fruits for this purpose;

2 Note that the front of pack and legal product names and order of foods may differ. Follow the front-of-pack names for product categorisation where possible.

3 Fruit chews include any dried and processed fruit products such as fruit gums, bars or fruit strips/leathers/roll-ups (i.e. a dense chewy food made from fruit juice or pulped and dehydrated/dried fruit)

4 Includes any drinkable product containing crushed, blended, pulped or puréed fruit/vegetable, fruit/vegetable juice and/or water, with or without added free sugar or sweetening agents. Including 100% juices, reconstituted juice from concentrate, smoothies with added juice or water, drinks made from cordials, energy drinks, ices, and soft drinks.

**EXAMPLE: Report table for compositional requirements among 60 products assessed in [example country]**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Product group** | **Code** | **Sub-category description** | **Products evaluated** | **Energy density** | **Large portion size** | **Sodium** | **Total sugar** | **Contains free sugars** | **Protein content** | **Total fat** | **Excessive fruit content** | **Overall category**  **FAIL rate** |
| **Dry cereals and starches** | 1 | Dry or powdered cereal/starch to be eaten or cooked with milk or water | 5 | Fail: 0/5 | / | Fail: 1/5 | / | Fail: 2/5 | Fail: 0/2  (only 2 products contained milk) | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 3/3  Missing: 2 | 3/5 |
| **Dairy foods** | 2 | Dairy-based foods, desserts and cereals | 5 | Fail: 0/5 | / | Fail: 1/5 | / | Fail: 1/5 | / | Fail: 1/5 | Fail: 0/4  Missing: 1 | 2/5 |
| **Fruit & vegetable purees/ smoothies and fruit desserts** | 3.1 | Fruit-containing product, including breakfast/ dairy | 5 | Fail: 2/5 | / | Fail: 1/5 | / | Fail: 2/5 | / | Fail: 0/5 | / | 2/5 |
| 3.2 | Vegetable only product | 5 | Fail: 1/5  (excessive added water) | / | Fail: 0/5 | / | Fail: 0/5 | / | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 0/5 | 1/5 |
| **Savoury meals and meal-components** | 4.1 | Food WITHOUT protein or cheese named | 5 | Fail: 2/5 | / | Fail: 2/5 | Fail: 1/5 | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 1/5 | Fail: 1/5 | 3/5 |
| 4.2 | Food WITH CHEESE named but no protein | 5 | Fail: 0/5 | / | Fail 4/5 | Fail: 2/5 | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 2/5 | Fail: 0/5 | 4/5 |
| 4.3 | Food with protein source NOT named first | 5 | Fail: 0/5 | / | Fail: 1/5 | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 0/4  Missing: 1 | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 2/5 | 3/5 |
| 4.4 | Food with protein source named FIRST | 5 | Fail: 0/5 | / | Fail: 2/5 | Fail: 1/5 | Fail: 0/5 | Fail: 0/3  Missing 2 | Fail: 1/5 | Fail: 0/5 | 3/5 |
| 4.5 | Protein source is ONLY named food | 2 | Fail 0/2 | / | Fail: 1/2 | Fail: 0/2 | Fail: 0/2 | Fail: 0/2 | Fail: 0/2 | Fail: 0/5 | 1/2 |
| **Snacks and finger foods** | 5.1 | Fruit | 2 | / | Fail: 2/2 | Fail: 0/2 | / | Fail: 2/2 | / | Fail: 0/2 | / | 2/2 |
| 5.2 | Dry or semi-dry snacks and finger foods | 5 | / | Fail: 4/4  Missing: 1 | Fail: 4/5 | Fail: 3/5 | Fail: 2/5 | Fail: 0/1  (only 1 product contained milk) | Fail: 1/5 | / | 4/5 |
| **Ingredients** | 6 | Ingredients | 2 | / | / | Fail: 0/2 | Fail: 0/2 | Fail 0/2 | / | / | Fail 0/2 | 0/2 |
| **Confectionery** | 7 | Confectionery | 5 | Not appropriate for promotion | | | | | | | | 5/5 |
| **Drinks** | 8 | Drinks | 4 | Not appropriate for promotion | | | | | | | | 4/4 |
| **Overall requirement FAIL rate** |  |  |  | 5/42 | 6/6 | 17/51 | 7/29 | 9/51 | 0/22 | 6/49 | 6/39 | 37/60 |

**EXAMPLE:**

**Summary of compositional failures among 60 products assessed in [example country]**

**Energy density:** Products largely met minimum energy density requirements (5/42 failed) except for one vegetable and lentil product (category 4.1) and some fruit and vegetable purees (3.1 and 3.2). These all had energy density lower than 60kcal/100g.

**Portion size:** Recommended portion sizes for the 6 snacks that reported this were too large (above 50kcal per serving).

**Sodium:** Meals containing cheese, some other meals, and 4/5 snack products contained excessive sodium (over 50mg/100kcal or 100mg/100kcal when cheese was named).

**Total sugar content:** Some meals had high sugar contents (over 15% energy) because of added dry fruit or high carrot content. Snacks with excessive sugar content contained free sugars (including fruit juice or concentrated fruit juice) or had high content of dry fruit (raisins).

**Free sugars:** Some dry cereals (category 1), dairy desserts (category 2) and fruit products (yogurts and smoothies) contained added sugar or added fruit juice.

**Protein:** Products met minimum protein thresholds, though several meal products did not report the proportion (% by product weight) of protein source in the ingredient list.

**Total fat:** Products largely met maximum total fat thresholds, though some meals containing cheese and 1 fried snack product had excessive fat content.

**Fruit content:** Some dry cereals contained excessive fruit content (above 10% dry weight) and some savoury meals included greater than 5% fruit (max.2% dry fruit) because of added apricot puree and apple puree.

**Non-permitted products:** Flavoured or sweetened drinks and sweet snacks foods are not permitted to be sold for infants and young children but this assessment identified several fruit-based drinks and many sweet snacks being marketed as suitable. These included biscuits, cakes and chewy sweets or chewy cereal bars containing free sugars or with high content of concentrated/dry fruit (e.g. concentrated apple puree or raisin puree).

**Overall:** Of 60 products evaluated, 37 failed at least 1 nutritional or ingredient requirement.

**EXAMPLE:**

**Report table for promotional requirements among 60 products assessed in [example country]**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Product group** | **Code** | **Sub-category description** | **Number of products evaluated** | **Minimum age under 6 months** | **Max. age not stated/ greater than 12 months (purees only)** | **High total sugar indicator needed** | **Inappropriate composition health or marketing claims** | **Product name unclear** | **Ingredient list missing data** | **Missing instructions not to drink via spout (if has spout)** | **Missing/ inappropriate preparation instructions (if required)** | **Missing/ inappropriate statements to protect/promote breastfeeding** | **Overall category**  **FAIL rate** |
| **Dry cereals and starches** | 1 | Dry or powdered cereal/starch to be eaten or cooked with milk or water | # | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# |
| **Dairy foods** | 2 | Dairy-based foods, desserts and cereals | # | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# |
| **Fruit & vegetable purees/ smoothies and fruit desserts** | 3.1 | Fruit-containing product | # | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# |
| 3.2 | Vegetable only product | # | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# |
| **Savoury meals and meal-components** | 4.1 | Food WITHOUT protein or cheese named | # | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# |
| 4.2 | Food WITH CHEESE named | # | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# |
| 4.3 | Food with protein source NOT named first | # | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# |
| 4.4 | Food with protein source named FIRST | # | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# |
| 4.5 | Protein source is ONLY named food | # | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# |
| **Snacks and finger foods** | 5.1 | Fruit | # | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | / | / | x/# | x/# |
| 5.2 | Dry or semi-dry snacks and finger foods | # | x/# | / | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | / | / | x/# | x/# |
| **Ingredients** | 6 | Ingredients | # | x/# | / | / | x/# | x/# | x/# | / | x/# | x/# | x/# |
| **Confectionery** | 7 | Confectionery | # | Not appropriate for promotion | | | | | | | | | x/# |
| **Drinks** | 8 | Drinks | # | Not appropriate for promotion | | | | | | | | | x/# |
| **Overall requirement FAIL rate** |  |  |  | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# | x/# |

**EXAMPLE:**

**Summary of promotional issues among 60 products assessed in [example country]**

**Advertised as suitable under 6 months:** 25 of 60 products were advertised as suitable from 4 months of age.

**Purees advertised as suitable over 12 months or with missing age cap:** none of the pureed products evaluated included a maximum age requirement

**Requires front-of-pack label for high sugar content:** 3 of 5 dry cereals, no dairy products and 5 of 5 fruit-based products had high total sugar content and would require a high sugar indicator label.

**Inappropriate composition, health, or marketing claims:** Almost all products evaluated included inappropriate pack claims.

**Misleading product name:** Most products had appropriate product names except fruit-based purees and some meal products that implied lower fruit content or implied higher content of dairy or cereals than were present.

**Missing data in ingredient list:** Several meals did not report the proportion of protein source in the ingredient list and the proportion of water added in pureed foods was often no specified.

**Product with spout but without correct serving advice**: almost all products sold with a spout omitted statements about serving foods on a spoon.

**Missing or inappropriate preparation instructions:** Most products did not include statements about preparing dry cereal foods using unsweetened milk

**Packs statements to protect or promote breastfeeding:** Almost half of products included no statements about the importance of continued breastfeeding.

**ANNEX 1: Data collection methodology for food products for infants (under 12 months) and young children (12-36 months)**

Included products:

* labelled with the words “baby”, “infant,” “toddler” or “young child”;
* recommended for introduction at an age of less than 3 years;
* have a label with an image of a child who appears to be younger than 3 years of age or who is feeding with a bottle; or
* in any other way are presented as being suitable for children under the age of 3 years.

Excluded products:

* Products not marketed for children under 3 years;
* Vitamin and mineral food supplements;
* Products that function as breast-milk substitutes.

Sampling strategy:

* Decide on a suitable sampling approach before data collection begins to ensure consistency between those collecting data in different locations.
* Consider different retailers such as independent, small or large retailers (supermarkets, convenience stores, pharmacies, health food shops) and online retailers.
* Consider known product ranges for smaller and larger brands (e.g. website searches) to ensure all data are captured
* Consider data collection in different regions of the country, areas with different economic status, or areas with other different population characteristics.
* Decide whether to purchase items, collect data in stores and/or photograph packets (to evaluate later), or use online product data (e.g. on large retailer/brand websites). Consider what permissions or letters of introduction about the study might be needed to collect data in store or photograph packets.
* Consider how to communicate data collection progress across different locations to avoid duplication of purchasing/data collection.

Data extraction:

* Use the online tool downloadable spreadsheet to inform you on the nutrient and packet data that needs to be collected, including brand and product name.
* Collect any other relevant data for your work such as place of sale or product price.
* Check data for product duplication and accuracy/obvious errors before evaluation using the online tool.