

SALTSMART CONSORTIUM CONSENSUS STATEMENT

to advance target harmonization by agreeing on regional targets for the salt/sodium content of key food categories

January 2015

BACKGROUND

All parties to the Consortium affirm the strength of the evidence relating the overconsumption of salt/sodium to high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke and kidney disease and affirm that lowering salt/sodium intake is a best buy for preventing and lowering the risk for these diseases.

The global target of 30% relative reduction in salt/sodium intake is a means by which the populations of WHO Member States can reach the recommended intake level of <2000mg sodium per day. For the Americas Region, the Pan American Health Organization encourages achievement of the recommended intake by 2020.

Individuals have difficulty limiting their intake of salt/sodium to the recommended amount as it is added to processed and prepared food products before purchase. In the Americas, the main sources of salt/sodium are diverse, from prepackaged foods, restaurant meals and processed foods to products commonly used during home cooking of which high quantities are consumed or relatively small amounts have highly concentrated salt/sodium levels. Establishing voluntary or mandatory targets to limit the salt/sodium content of these food products is key to effectively reducing salt/sodium intake at the population level.

All parties to the Consortium affirm that a meaningful strategy to reduce salt/sodium consumption across populations must have the cooperation of food manufacturers, food processors, food importers and the restaurant sectors to lower the salt/sodium in the food supply. At the same time, successful salt/sodium intake reduction requires action and partnership at all levels – individuals, civil society, healthcare providers and their professional societies, academia, public health agencies, governments and all actors in the food supply chain – to shift social norms such that people demand and gain greater control over the amount of salt/sodium they consume.

HARMONIZATION OF REGIONAL TARGETS AND TIMELINES

The Consortium in its Strategic Plan 2013-18 agreed to advance the harmonization of targets and timelines for reducing salt/sodium content within common food groups; and to promote and implement reformulations to reduce salt/sodium in a group of agreed-upon products, building on and encouraging existing national and industry efforts.

The Consortium recognizes that harmonizing salt/sodium reduction targets will benefit both national strategies to improve the quality of the food supply and food industry processes: countries without targets can take advantage of the targets and timelines already in place and the lessons learned from others; consumers across the Region will be in a better position to achieve the recommended intake and the associated health gains; and food

companies can migrate to harmonized formulations for same-products supplied to markets in the Americas.

The reformulation experiences in five countries in the Americas – Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile and the National Salt Reduction Initiative (NSRI) in the United States (an entity outside the federal government) – are informing a set of harmonized regional targets. The food categories being reformulated and the targets and timelines associated with them were established through negotiations between public health authorities and the food industry, with assistance from independent food technology experts and in some cases inputs of consumers – evidence that salt/sodium reduction targets are feasible and acceptable in the Americas.

From the five countries, 12 key food categories undergoing reformulation are selected to have regional targets. As for target types, the Consortium acknowledges that maximum values (upper limits) are the most straightforward concept for governments, consumers and the food industry to apply on a regional basis. Hence the maximum salt/sodium values that four countries have set (Argentina, Brazil, Canada and Chile) for the key foods are the basis for regional targets. (NSRI does not have maximum value targets.)

Regarding the timeline for achieving regional targets, the Consortium recognizes that the food industry can reformulate products incrementally and has set end of 2016 as the endpoint for the first set of regional targets, providing a two-year window for adjustments in food processing. As more countries set and reach progressively lower targets, a downward trend in maximum values is expected. Maintaining regional targets will therefore require ongoing monitoring and a process to reset values. The Consortium anticipates reassessing the regional target values at two-year intervals e.g. in 2016, 2018 and 2020.

The setting of regional targets does not preclude countries from establishing more stringent national targets, either voluntary or mandatory, for priority food categories. Harmonized regional targets are to support expansion and consistency of salt/sodium reduction efforts across a larger number of countries in the Region.

The Consortium recommends that in countries where targets cannot currently be derived from national data, governments, food companies and civil society adopt the regional targets as the starting points for reformulation schedules.

PRINCIPLES FOR AGREEING ON, MAINTAINING AND MONITORING REGIONAL TARGETS

The multisectoral Consortium members accept the set of principles to guide their working together to agree on, maintain and monitor regional targets:

- Regional targets are agreed upon, based on existing targets approved by governments in the Americas.
- Regional targets are voluntary and recommended as a starting point for product reformulations. Governments may set or regulate different targets, and are encouraged to develop more stringent targets appropriate to their national situations.
- Existing maximum values are the basis for regional targets in an initial phase of harmonization; regional targets apply to a limited number of key food categories.

- The regional target for a food category is the highest value in the range of existing maximum values; it is hoped that the regional target will evolve towards the lower target in the range.
- Regional targets will be revised on a two-year cycle as progress with reformulations in the key food categories shifts salt/sodium levels downwards.
- Monitoring and evaluation of industry adherence to regional targets will be transparent.

DEFINITIONS

Key food categories – the food categories or products selected for reformulation in at least two of the five initiatives in the Americas with the most comprehensive reformulation schedules – Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile and the NSRI. Food category definitions are taken from the *Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS)* of the World Customs Organization.¹ Where HS codes do not apply, or if preferred, the category definitions established by countries can be used.

Maximum value – the upper limit for salt/sodium concentration for a food category or product accepted by public health authorities and food companies to be technologically feasible and acceptable to consumers, yet sufficient to achieve a public health impact.

Regional target for salt/sodium concentration – the highest value for salt/sodium concentration per 100g of food product taken from the range of existing maximum values/upper limits per key food category set by countries in the Americas. Where the regional target for a food category has already been met, reformulations for the category should aim for the lower target, although some lower targets may only apply to specific sub-categories of products.

Lower target – the lowest value for salt/sodium concentration per 100g of food product in the range of existing maximum values/upper limits per key food category set by countries in the Americas. Some lower targets may only apply to specific sub-categories of products within a key food category.

REGIONAL TARGETS FOR SALT REDUCTION IN THE AMERICAS, ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2014 (TO BE MET BY END OF 2016²)
 BASED ON MAXIMUM TARGETS SET BY COUNTRIES FOR KEY FOOD CATEGORIES AS mg Na / 100g³ AS OF OCTOBER 2014

The regional target for a food category is the highest value in the range of existing maximum values. If a maximum target has already been met, it is recommended that reformulations aim for the lower target in the range, recognizing that some lower targets may only apply to specific sub-categories of products within the key food category.

Food categories correspond to the *Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS)* of the World Customs Organization.¹ Where HS codes do not apply, or users need additional details on categories and sub-categories, see country data sources in the footnotes.

	ARGENTINA ⁴	BRAZIL ⁵	CANADA ⁶	CHILE ⁷	UK ⁸
BREAD	503 (2015) breads with bran	artisanal bakery (French) bread	586 (2014) pantry bread, rolls, bagels, croissants, flatbread	artisanal bakery bread	bread and rolls
	476 (2015) breads without bran	industrially produced loaf bread	522 (2014) hearth bread	private label supermarket bread	bread and rolls with additions
	527 (2015) frozen breads	industrially produced buns	430 (2014)		morning goods – yeast raised
					morning goods – powder raised
REGIONAL TARGET: 600 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 400 mg Na / 100g (2016)					
SOUP ¹⁰ HS 21.04	430 noodles in broth (cubes, tablets, granules)	instant individual soups	330 (2017) bouillon and broth		soups as consumed includes all wet and dried soups
	346 clear soups	ready to consume and	314 (2017) condensed wet		

ARGENTINA ⁴		BRAZIL ⁵		CANADA ⁶		CHILE ⁷		UK ⁸		
	cream soups	306	dry soups		ready to serve					
	instant soups	352			fresh and instant oriental noodle					
					dry (as consumed)					
REGIONAL TARGET FOR ALL WET AND DRY SOUPS (AS CONSUMED): 360 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 306 mg Na / 100g (2016) REGIONAL TARGET FOR NOODLES IN BROTH (AS CONSUMED) : 430 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 360 mg Na / 100g (2016)										
MAYONNAISE HS 21.03.90				1,051 (2014)		840 (2016)		100/15mL [e.g. – 667]	not reduced fat/calories	500 (2017)
									reduced fat/calories	680 (2017)
REGIONAL TARGET: 1050 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 670 mg Na / 100g (2016)										
BISCUITS & COOKIES HS 19.05	crackers without bran	890 (2015)	salted biscuits	699 (2014)	cookies	390 (2016)			sweet biscuits	380 (2017)
	crackers with bran	890 (2015)	sweet biscuits	359 (2014)	crackers	930 (2016)			savory biscuits	700 (2017)
	sweet without filling	485 (2015)	filled cookies	265 (2014)						
	sweet with filling	425 (2015)								
	savory biscuits	1340 (2015)								
REGIONAL TARGET FOR COOKIES AND SWEET BISCUITS: 485 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 265 mg Na / 100g (2016)										

ARGENTINA ⁴	BRAZIL ⁵	CANADA ⁶	CHILE ⁷	UK ⁸
REGIONAL TARGET FOR SAVORY BISCUITS AND CRACKERS: 1340 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 700 mg Na / 100g (2016)				
CAKES HS 19.05		332 (2014)	400 (2016)	280 (2017)
	cakes without filling			cakes
	filled cakes	242 (2014)		pastries
	roulade	204 (2014)		sweet pies and other short crust or choux pastry based desserts
	mixes for aerated cakes	334 (2016)		
	mixes for creamy cakes	250 (2016)		
REGIONAL TARGET: 400 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 205 mg Na / 100g (2016)				
MEATS HS 16.01-16.02	1190	650 (2017)	690 (2016)	550 (2017)
	cooked pork products e.g. sausages, ham, morcilla	nuggets and breaded meat and poultry	uncooked fresh sausage	uncooked sausages
	1900	740 (2017)	870 (2016)	680 (2017)
	dried pork products e.g. salami	hamburgers	cooked sausage	cooked sausages and sausage meat products

	ARGENTINA ⁴		BRAZIL ⁵		CANADA ⁶		CHILE ⁷		UK ⁸	
	fresh sausage	950	cooked sausage conserved at room temp	1,500 (2017)	cooked deli meats	890 (2016)			cooked uncured meat	270 (2017)
	hamburgers	850	cooked sausage conserved under refrigeration	1,210 (2017)	dry cured, fermented deli meats	1,400 (2016)			fresh burgers and grill steaks	350 (2017)
	chicken products e.g. nuggets	736	uncooked fresh sausage	970 (2017)	breaded meat and poultry e.g. nuggets	470 (2016)			fresh chilled frankfurters (hot dogs)	750 (2017)
			hot dogs	1,120 (2017)						
			bologna conserved under refrigeration	1,180 (2017)						
			bologna conserved at room temp	1,350 (2017)						
			ham (meat and poultry)	1,160 (2017)						
REGIONAL TARGET FOR COOKED, UNCOOKED AND PROCESSED MEATS AND SAUSAGES: 1,210 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 690 mg Na / 100g (2016) REGIONAL TARGET FOR DRY CURED MEATS AND MEATS CONSERVED AT ROOM TEMPERATURES: 1,900 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 1,350 mg Na / 100g (2016) REGIONAL TARGET FOR BREADED MEAT AND POULTRY: 735 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 470 mg Na / 100g (2016)										

	ARGENTINA ⁴	BRAZIL ⁵	CANADA ⁶	CHILE ⁷	UK ⁸
BREAKFAST CEREALS HS 19.04			ready to eat cereals	breakfast cereals	breakfast cereals
			hot instant cereals		
REGIONAL TARGET: 630 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 500 mg Na / 100g (2016)					
CHEESE, PROCESSED CHEESE PRODUCTS AND CHEESE SPREADS		cheese spread ("requijao")	cottage cheese		cheddar and other similar "hard pressed" cheeses
		mozzarella	cream cheese, cream cheese products, soft unripened goat cheese		"fresh" cheeses
			brie, camembert, cheddar, swiss, monterey, jack, brick, colby, gouda, mozzarella		cottage cheese
			feta and feta-style		mozzarella
			hard cheese grated and ungrated		processed cheese spreads

	ARGENTINA ⁴	BRAZIL ⁵	CANADA ⁶	CHILE ⁷	UK ⁸
			processed cheese and other cheese products	1,670 (2016)	other processed cheese e.g. sliced
NO HARMONIZED TARGET DUE TO WIDE VARIATION IN PRODUCT TYPES AND TARGETS. EXISTING TARGETS CAN BE USED FOR COMPARABLE PRODUCTS.					
BUTTER/DAIRY SPREADS HS 04.05 MARGARINE HS 15.17			salted butter and butter blends	800 (2016)	salted butter and butter spreads
			salted margarine	800 (2016)	margarine/other spreads
REGIONAL TARGET: 800 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 500 mg Na / 100g (2016)					
SNACKS HS 19.05 OR 20.05		extruded corn snacks	747 (2016)	chips, popcorn, extruded corn snacks	standard potato crisps
		potato chips	529 (2016)		extruded and sheeted snacks
	snacks	900 (2015)			
REGIONAL TARGET: 900 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 530 mg Na / 100g (2016)					

	ARGENTINA ⁴		BRAZIL ⁵		CANADA ⁶		CHILE ⁷		UK ⁸	
HS 19.02 PASTA		instant pasta with seasoning (dry, uncooked)	1,921 (2012) [calculated as 640 mg/100g as consumed]	shelf stable pasta, noodles and rice or other grains with sauce or seasoned (as consumed)	440 (2016) [calculated as 1333 mg/100g dry uncooked]				pasta and noodles (as consumed)	350 (2017)
REGIONAL TARGET FOR SHELF STABLE PASTA AND NOODLES (DRY, UNCOOKED): 1921 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 1333 mg Na / 100g (2016)										
REGIONAL TARGET FOR SHELF STABLE PASTA AND NOODLES (AS CONSUMED): 640 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 440 mg Na / 100g (2016)										
HS 21.03 CONDIMENTS		condiments for pasta	33,134 (2015)	seasonings for side and main dishes	9,100 (2016)					
		condiments for rice	32,076 (2015)	meat and fish seasonings	23,000 (2016)					
		other salt based condiments (e.g. for meat)	21,775 (2015)	bouillon cubes and powders (as consumed)	360/100 mL (as consumed) ¹⁰ [e.g.18,000 (dry) assuming 5g powder/250 mL]					
		bouillon cubes and powders (dry)	20,500 ¹¹							
REGIONAL TARGET FOR RICE AND SIDE/MAIN DISH CONDIMENTS (NOT MEAT OR FISH): 33,100 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 9,100 mg Na / 100g (2016)										
REGIONAL TARGET FOR MEAT AND FISH CONDIMENTS: 23,000 mg Na / 100g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 21,775 mg Na / 100g (2016)										
REGIONAL TARGET FOR BOUILLON CUBES AND POWDERS: 20,500 mg Na / 100 g (2016); LOWER TARGET: 18,000 mg Na / 100g (2016)										

- ¹ World Customs Organization HS Nomenclature 2012 Edition at http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/nomenclature/instrument-and-tools/hs_nomenclature_2012/hs_nomenclature_table_2012.aspx.
- ² New targets to be developed at two-year intervals e.g. for 2018 and 2020 to recognize and support incremental reductions in sodium.
- ³ Countries' maximum level targets (year), when given, are indicated in mg/100g; values expressed per serving have been [converted to mg/100g] where indicated.
- ⁴ Menos Sal + Vida at <http://www.msal.gov.ar/ent/index.php/informacion-para-ciudadanos/menos-sal--vida>; Consumo de sodio. Valores Máximos. 2013 at http://www.msal.gov.ar/ent/images/stories/programas/pdf/2014-08_Ley26905-Ley-Sodio.pdf; Acta Adhesion al Convenio Marco de Rediccion Voluntaria y Progresiva del Contenido de Sodio – Periodo 2013/2015 [Anexo 2: Farináceos] at http://www.msal.gov.ar/ent/images/stories/programas/pdf/2015-01_metas-farinaceos-periodo-2013_2015.pdf
- ⁵ Termo de compromiso [2011, 2012, 2013]: See “Materiais de Apoio” at http://dab.saude.gov.br/portaldab/ape_promocao_da_saude.php?conteudo=reduca
- ⁶ Guiding benchmark sodium reduction levels for processed foods; summary table at http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/legislation/guide-id/2012-sodium-reduction-indust_sum_table-eng.php
- ⁷ Decreto #12 respecto a la Normativa grafica para el etiquetado informativo en los alimentos at http://web.minsal.cl/sites/default/files/DecretoN_12_Tomado_Razon9diciembre.pdf
- ⁸ UK maxima provided for comparison purposes only; they were not used to set regional targets. UK salt targets for 2017 at http://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.food.gov.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fmulti-media%2Fspreadsheets%2Fsalttargets2017.xls&ei=JFqTVIrrNlqzoQSSmoHQAaw&usq=AFQjCNGYhIVDYxcz7DtuOXrWjRNdSx2Gkg&sig2=4yaztWl3rdEB_kkrQcdBSQ&bvm=bv.82001339,d.cGU
- ⁹ Ministerio de Salud. (2014). Estrategia de Reducción de SAL/SODIO en los Alimentos. Gobierno de Chile, Nutricion. http://web.minsal.cl/alimentos_nutricion.
- ¹⁰ Values reported per 100g (as consumed)
- ¹¹ Data are shown for both dry and as consumed. In Canada, bouillon cubes are categorized as soups but in many countries they are used as condiments. Canadian targets for soups have been repeated here and converted for comparison with Brazil.