

ANNEX V

Protocol for collecting information on *eating out* in the HBSs

Collecting information on meals taken out of the household in the national household budget surveys.

State of the art

In order to understand the information on eating out, currently available in the national household budget surveys (HBS), a common questionnaire was disseminated among the participants of the DAFNE IV project. The results of this inventory were presented in the third plenary meeting (Vienna, May 2004). In an attempt to summarise the current state of the art, the following points could be drawn:

- All countries record information on expenses related to eating out occasions. In some countries (Finland and Portugal), some quantitative information is additionally collected, usually in relation to particular food items that can easily be assessed in pieces.
- Expenses are usually grouped according to the place of consumption (e.g. expenses in restaurants; cafeterias; fast food outlets or take away).
- Information on the type of meal consumed (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack) is not always collected (information available in the recent Austrian dataset and some data collected in the German survey).
- A clear and common definition on what is meant by *eating out* is missing.
- No information is available on the number of eating out occasions, within one day.
- In case of meals, no information is collected on the number of people sharing the meal.
- In most cases, the main diary keeper is also responsible for monitoring the out of home food expenses of all household members. In Greece and Portugal, each member above a certain age (e.g. 14 years old in Greece) is given a separate questionnaire.
- Data are collected on the basis of a pre-defined list of items. Exceptions again stand for Greece and Portugal, where participants write down their acquisitions and data are aggregated and coded at a later stage

Given the contribution of out-of home food consumption in the daily food intake, the Consortium of the DAFNE IV project discussed the feasibility of advancing the information on eating out currently collected through the HBS. In this context, participants reached the following conclusions:

1. Definition

There is a need for a clear and common definition, which will be adopted by the Offices responsible for data collection. The definition, accompanied by examples, should be explicitly described to both interviewers and participants. As a common definition, the Consortium concluded to the following:

Meals taken out of home are defined as consumption of food and drink outside the home that is not obtained from the household's stocks. It therefore covers a range of situations from, for example, food purchased from fast food outlets at lunchtime through to a formal evening meal in a restaurant or an invitation to a friend's house . Food consumed outside the home but taken from household supplies, such as picnics and packed lunches, is covered within the main HBSs..

The above is adopted from the official publications of the British Expenditure and Food Survey (former National Food Survey). In the British survey, an eating out component was added to the main survey in 1992 and results have been published on a yearly basis since 1994 (<http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/publications/nfs/default.asp>).

2. Survey sample

All households participating in the HBS should, preferably, be asked to collect information on food quantities consumed outside the household premises and not coming from the household supplies. If, however, there is concern about a reduction in the HBS response rate, a sub-sample could alternatively be used. To assure national representativeness and feasibility of generalising results, the sub-sample should be selected on the basis of the same criteria used for the main HBS sample.

3. Questionnaires

If open diaries are used in the main survey, then open diaries can also be used for recording the out-of-home food consumption. If not, closed questionnaires can be the option.

Questionnaires should collect information on the following:

- Place of consumption
- Type of meal (breakfast; snack; lunch; dinner; beverage)
- Description of foods and/or beverages consumed
- Cost
- Quantities consumed

In an open questionnaire, participants will be asked to describe what they had from the menu and how much they consumed.

In a closed questionnaire, the following choices can be included:

- **Place of consumption** (hotel/restaurant; café, bar, fast food outlet, street vendor; canteen, mensa (university); school meal; food delivery service; friends' house; means of transportation; other)
- **Type of meal** (breakfast; snack; lunch; dinner; beverage)
- **Description of foods and/or beverages consumed** (provide participants with the list used for the in-house consumption)
- **Cost**
- **Quantities consumed** (number of portions; pieces; bottles; cups; glasses) Sizes can be defined as small, medium or large and the allocated quantities have to be defined on a national level (possible sources: catering outlets, official food portion size books, package weights, experience from national food surveys).

If the Agencies decide to use a closed questionnaire only for recording eating out, then the food groupings applied in the process of data aggregation and coding can be considered as an option.

Individual person questionnaires are strongly recommended.

Interviewers would have to assure the adequate collection of out of home food data and that food and drink consumed will be recorded, even if the expenditure is not recorded. The use of till receipts can also be considered, but with due attention in differentiating the food consumed by the respondent versus the food paid by the respondent. Interviewers may also need to probe for precise details, such as whether a food was “low fat” or whether a soft drink had added sugar.

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