

## Title

**IN FORM – Germany's national initiative to promote healthy diets and physical activity**

## Short description

The National Action Plan "IN FORM – German national initiative to promote healthy diets and physical activity" is aimed at bringing about lasting improvements in dietary and exercise habits in Germany by 2020.

It is the federal government's objective that adults should live more healthily and that children should be brought up more healthily and benefit from a higher quality of life and better physical and mental ability in their education, jobs and private lives. IN FORM is therefore aimed at much more than just preventing overweight. It is about promoting a healthy lifestyle with a well-balanced diet and sufficient physical activity. The early stage of IN FORM has now been completed. It has served, among other things, to develop instruments and structures for the implementation of the National Action Plan, to integrate into the IN FORM process already existing measures and activities that promote healthy diets and increased physical activity, and to launch and support new projects in different living environments.

To date, almost 200 projects have been supported by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG) under the IN FORM initiative. In the years to come – during the so-called consolidation and dissemination phase – activities will mainly concentrate on:

- establishing (and stabilising) measures and projects supported under the IN FORM initiative in the longer term,
- disseminating findings and results, and
- promoting both the exchange of experiences and networking between actors within the projects.

IN FORM thus facilitates the "dialogue" between policy-makers, industry, the science community and civil society with regard to all questions concerning a healthy lifestyle. This, among other aspects, is reflected on the initiative's internet platform.

## Topic

Moving – Active mobility

Consuming – food

## Characteristics (type, level)

Local/Regional, National Intervention

National Policy

## Country/Countries of implementation

Germany

## Aims and Objectives

With its National Action Plan, the German government aims to foster healthier environments for children to grow up in, to encourage adults to adopt healthier lifestyles and to see society as a whole enjoy a higher quality of life and physical fitness. The action plan also intends to significantly reduce illnesses and diseases to which unhealthy lifestyles,

unbalanced diets and lack of physical activity contribute. To reach the aim of sustainably improving people's habits concerning diets and physical activity, the following actions shall be taken:

- Positive approaches towards healthy diets and sufficient physical activity shall be bundled and oriented towards the targets they have in common. Their implementation is monitored regularly.
- Strategies and measures which include individual behaviours and take both the regional and national levels into consideration are developed regularly.
- Structures are being created which enable people to lead health-sustaining lifestyles.

With its target-oriented measures, the National Action Plan addresses everyone in Germany. It wants to achieve visible results by 2020 by positively influencing people's habits relating to diets and physical activity and by reducing illnesses and diseases caused by unhealthy diets.

### Target Group

The initiative IN FORM is aimed at the entire population. The people are to be reached where they live, work, learn and play. The initiative focuses on the "lifestyles" (family, kindergartens and schools, professionals and elderly people). This action plan is increasingly targeted. The priorities were children and adolescents (2012), professionals (2013) and elderly people (2014).

### Status

Ongoing

### Start and Completion dates

2008-today

### Lifestyle and Behavior Change

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- Structures are being created which enable people to lead health-sustaining lifestyles.

### Effects on:

<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	fostering healthier environments for children to grow up in, encouraging adults to adopt healthier lifestyles and seeing society as a whole enjoy a higher quality of life and physical fitness. The action plan also intends to significantly reduce illnesses and diseases to which unhealthy lifestyles, unbalanced diets and lack of physical activity contribute.
<b>Vulnerable populations</b>	by covering all social levels and vulnerable groups of population
<b>Environment</b>	Indirectly, by addressing the environmental health issues

### Initiated and/or implemented by

The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG)

### Stakeholders and sectors involved

The promotion of a healthy lifestyle is a common goal of federal, State and local authorities. In addition to the policy, but also health care, society, economy, media and all other actors from the social area are asked to support the national action plan. The national action plan is the result of close cooperation of the two federal ministries of health (BMG) and food and Agriculture (BMEL). There's a joint office for coordination. There are:

- Permanent cooperation between states and local authorities
- Dedicated citizens are needed as civil society
- The national action plan is a dynamic instrument of dialogue

### Financial support

The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG)

### Evidence-base

Overweight, misdirected developments in the nutritional behaviour, as well as increasing movement deficits are considered a health problem in children and adolescents. The consequences of this development appear also in the town of Holzminden. The data of the school entrance examinations of district for the public schools showed that in the years 2003-2005 an average of approximately 20 percent of children at school (5 to 7 years) were overweight.

### Main activities

IN FORM has supported to develop instruments and structures for the implementation of the National Action Plan, to integrate into the IN FORM process already existing measures and activities that promote healthy diets and increased physical activity, and to launch and support new projects in different living environments.

### Evaluation

The scientific evaluation of the two funding phases was carried out by the Max Rubner Institute (MRI) in Karlsruhe. Focus of the evaluation was to work out what measures, with which partners, and in which structural context of the development of obesity in children can be prevented permanently.

Recommendations can be derived from the results of both evaluations, how effectively can make prevention of obesity in children.

### **Methodology of the evaluation**

Evaluation modules

The evaluations were carried out in two phases of funding by means of a multimethodological evaluation design with several survey modules:

### **Analysis of the action offer**

Around 700 measures have been documented and evaluated. Longitudinal study with children and parents in the years 2007 and 2009. From the width of the measures, the MRI worked out characteristics of nutrition and movement action that had triggered positive change trends in nutritional behaviour, movement behavior and/or body measurements of the children.

### **Approaches for practice in all living environments of the child**

In this component of the evaluation it was to determine the effectiveness of actions on the target groups and therefore, which enhancing and inhibiting factors can promote the effectiveness of measures or prevent. In addition, successful and less successful access possibilities, for example to parents and families, children and educational institutions have been identified. Among other things, representative selected actions were accompanied intensively on-site.

### **Network evaluation**

All 24 model projects (networks) have been evaluated to identify which structure, what kind of control and network cooperation for the implementation of prevention work on the spot were conducive.

### **Sustainability**

The envisaged consolidation (adoption) of projects, networks and activities was evaluated in terms of the success of stabilization strategies used by the model projects absorbed mainly in the context of funding phase 2. In addition, enhancing and inhibiting factors for the success of initiatives were worked out.

In March 2017, the overall evaluation of the National Action Plan started. The evaluation consisting of several studies- refers to both, the entire activities since 2008 and the process accompanying activities till end of the evaluation in late 2018.

### **Main results**

Effectiveness of actions on the target groups, changes in nutritional and physical activity behaviours of participants.

### **Key success factors and barriers**

To tie a great number of initiatives ongoing in the fields of healthy diets and physical activities for children to one coordinated and well linked larger approach.

### **INHERIT Perspective**

IN FORM has been selected because it is a national action plan aiming to foster healthier environments for both, different population groups and ages to adopt healthier lifestyles and to see society as a whole enjoy a higher quality of life and physical fitness. IN FORM comprises two interventions 1) healthy diets and 2) physical activities, both intending to significantly reduce illnesses and diseases to which unhealthy lifestyles, unbalanced diets and lack of physical activity contribute. It addresses health and equity and has a clear emphasis on changing behaviour.

### **More information**

<https://www.in-form.de/profiportal/in-form/internationales/in-form-english-version.html>

### **Contact**

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