Official

FS900269 - Social Research Call Off



Work Package

All costs quoted should be <u>exclusive of VAT</u>.

Work Package Number: 1 Work Package Title: Making Food Better - Food Manufacturers Qualitative research 2023 Indicative Budget Range: £28,250 - 30,250 Please provide evidence of budget approval (e.g. FS number): FS404003 Deadline for response from Ipsos (usually 10 days): 29.06.2023 Supplier Name: Ipsos Point of contact at Ipsos: Email / phone number (Ipsos contact) Policy / comms area at FSA: Dietary Health Policy/ comms owner at FSA: Email / phone number (policy/comms contact): Telephone: Social research owner: Email / phone number (social research contact): Telephone: Work Package Start Date: 24th July 2023 Work Package End Date: 16th February 2024

Specification of requirements:

Background – please include:

- What you want to commission, and why

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) Northern Ireland Dietary Health team would like to commission a qualitative research project with food manufacturers as part of the Making Food Better (MFB) programme. We would like to conduct qualitative indepth interviews with food manufacturers to investigate engagement, views and challenges to reformulation of food products.

The MFB - Food Manufacturers Qualitative research will contribute to the implementation of the FSA MFB programme in Northern Ireland (NI) to develop an in depth understanding of how the FSA can best support food businesses with food product improvement in this area.

The FSA will also use the findings of this research to communicate directly with the NI food and drink industry on reformulation. The findings of this research can also be used to support the delivery of food reformulation events.

How does this project align to FSA strategic priorities?

The MFB – Food Manufacturers Qualitative research aligns with the FSA objective 'food is healthier and more sustainable'. The FSA know that dietary health and sustainability are growing priorities for the Northern Ireland Executive and for the consumers which we protect.

Dietary risks remain one of the largest factors that can increase the risk of developing a disease. Therefore, it is important that we play our part and work in collaboration with the food industry to make better and healthier food for the consumer. Part of this involves working with food businesses and food manufacturers. Healthier food can be achieved through reformulation of food products by reducing calories, saturated fat, sugar and salt.

- Background information about the policy area

The FSA in NI has the remit of Dietary Health Policy which is unique within the FSA.

This work is commissioned under the MFB Programme which supports Northern Ireland food businesses to make the food environment healthier through reducing calories, saturated fat, sugar, and salt in the food they produce, sell or serve, reducing portion size, providing nutritional information and delivering responsible promotions.

As part of the MFB programme, the Dietary Health team work closely with Northern Ireland food business to promote and support reformulation and encourage the provision of front of pack nutritional labelling.

Details of any previous research commissioned in this area by FSA or other organisations

It is necessary to conduct this qualitative research with food manufacturers as this will be the only research, to the knowledge of the FSA, that provides Northern Ireland specific data and insights on food manufacturers' attitudes and engagement with reformulation. Hence, the Food Manufacturers Qualitative research will provide a unique insight and play an essential role in informing the FSA's policy in this area.

The FSA currently commission an annual Making Food Better consumer tracking survey (previously known as the Eating Well Choosing Better (EWCB) consumer tracking survey), under the Making Food Better programme in Northern Ireland. The latest report for the EWCB consumer tracking survey (Wave 8) is published on the FSA website¹. The research report monitors consumer understanding and knowledge of a wide range of food-related topics from consumer perceptions of healthy eating, healthier options and reformulation; consumer use of traffic light

¹ https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/news/eating-well-choosing-better-tracker-survey-wave-8-2022

labels; and consumer knowledge and understanding of the recommended daily calorie intake.

The FSA are looking to build the evidence base on this topic as a gap was identified in terms of businesses views on these key topics. This is important as food businesses are key stakeholders in reformulation.

Objectives – please include:

The research questions:

The main aim of this research is to understand awareness, participation and attitudes towards reformulation and front of pack labelling among food manufacturers, and how they can be best supported to achieve this.

This research aims to investigate the following areas with food manufacturers in NI:

- Awareness and understanding of the UK Government's sugar, salt and calorie reduction guidelines
- Participation in reformulation (self-reported) and reasons for participating or not participating in reformulation to understand potential barriers to reformulation
- Support required to participate in reformulation (from FSA and in collaboration with other Government departments)
- Participation in reducing portion size
- Usage and attitudes towards front of pack nutrition labelling
- Business priorities at a broad level to understand if there is engagement with reformulation and if so, how important this is to businesses
- Engagement and communication of food product improvement messaging to consumers following changes (e.g. changing ingredients; reducing calories, saturated fat, sugar and salt; increasing fibre; adding vitamins), approaches to messaging (e.g. via health claims, nutrition claims or ingredient claims) and how messaging is sourced

Any other aims from the research (for example, testing a new methodology, informing future research or filling gaps in wider evidence)

The MFB – Food Manufacturers Qualitative research will play an essential role in informing the FSA's policy in this area. The Dietary Health team in the FSA will use the outputs of this research to work in partnership with our stakeholders, such as the food and drink industry, and other government departments to work towards achieving the objectives of the MFB programme. This research will be foundational, as it will be the first piece of research the FSA has conducted with this audience in this area. This will start to build the evidence base and may potentially inform future research if we learn about certain areas that require more in-depth investigation.

Another aim of the research is to improve awareness and understanding of reformulation among food manufacturers and encourage the update of reformulation. This may be achieved through dissemination of report findings and a visually designed infographic to provide businesses with information on reformulation and understand how they can be supported.

Methodology – please include (if applicable):

sampling considerations

It is important that the sample is reflective of food manufacturers based in NI. Ipsos should outline the sampling approach in their response including a detailed explanation of how sample will be obtained, any suggested methods to encourage participation and estimations for achieved number of interviews. We also ask Ipsos to provide details of the sample provider or database, the size of the sample we can contact, and an estimated target number of interviews with food manufacturers in Northern Ireland. Please also include any details around contacting businesses in advance (e.g. through warm-up emails) to engage with businesses and encourage them to take part in the research, in order to maximise response rate and the achieved sample.

We understand that financial incentives are not appropriate with this business audience. Please provide a rationale for this in the response and outline an approach that is suitable as an incentive for taking part in the research, for example early sight of top line findings (if possible) or the report being shared with research participants straight away upon publication or receiving support or guidance. In terms of guidance, the Dietary Health team have developed reformulation guidance which we can signpost businesses to. We also have scope to develop further guidance based on the outputs of this research.

- recruiting considerations (identifying and recruiting your cohort):

The sample should reflect an array of different types of food manufacturers in NI. Please see Annex 1 for SIC codes relating to food manufacturing sectors for inclusion. Ipsos should provide an explanation of how they will achieve this.

Only food manufacturers who produce food with scope for reformulation should be included in the research, as previously discussed with Ipsos. Please see Annex 1 for food categories and sub-categories with scope for reformulation.

Any inclusion/exclusion criteria must take this into consideration, alongside consideration of the key research questions.

We ask Ipsos to include details on a risk management approach if the target sample and number of interviews (n25) is not achieved. We understand Ipsos have previously provided an estimated sample size but will need to understand what steps would be taken to manage this in this scenario and how we would deal with this. Please include details in the response. We would also ask for weekly updates during recruitment and fieldwork to see progress on number of interviews achieved and scheduled, to ensure we have early sight should any issues arise. - ethical considerations

Informed consent must be obtained from all participants before they agree to take part in the research. Participants must also have the right to withdraw and have access to information about how their data will be held and used. Ipsos should provide an account of these processes in their response, and ensure their practices align with GSR principles on ethics. Please also include details on the appropriate approach to incentives and rationale for this.

- whether recontact is required (if you need to conduct further research with the same cohort in the near future)

If possible, we would like to include a recontact option when speaking with respondents who take part in the research, as we may consider future research with this audience. We ask Ipsos to provide details on any restrictions or limits on the time period we can hold this information for potential recontact.

- whether you have a specific methodology in mind, or are open to alternative methodologies (Ipsos to advise on different options)

We have agreed that depth interviews with food manufacturers is an appropriate methodology approach given the lack of available sample for this specific target audience, meaning a quantitative survey approach is not feasible. We would like lpsos to acknowledge this in the response to explain why we have chosen depth interviews and the steps taken during the exploration stage. As the research will be using a qualitative approach it is understood by the FSA that a quantitative survey 'tracking' approach to monitor attitudes and engagement will not be possible with this audience, however top-level changes or shifts in key themes and opinions could be observed if the research was repeated again in the future. It is important that this is considered when designing the methodology and conducting analysis, as we would need to record all steps taken to ensure repeatability in the future. Ipsos are invited to advise on their approach.

An initial draft questionnaire has been developed by FSA previously, before discussions took place and a qualitative approach was agreed. This draft questionnaire has been attached to the work package and can be used as a starting point for developing a discussion guide for interviews with food manufacturers. FSA colleagues will need to review and sign off all research materials including any screening criteria and the discussion guide before fieldwork commences. Ipsos should allow time for this in project timelines.

Please also provide details on the recommended approach to depth interviews with this audience, including the advised length of interview.

Research process – please include:

- Who from the FSA will be working on the project, and their roles/responsibilities (e.g., review, sign-off, project management)?

Members of the Dietary Health Team, Communications Team, Science, Evidence & Research Team will be involved throughout the duration of the project.

(NI Dietary Health Team) are the main internal policy customers for this research. They will decide the main project aims, appropriate approach and required outputs for this research. They will attend all project meetings and review and sign off the work package response and contract, arrange financial approval and invoicing, attend all project meetings, review and sign off research materials (e.g. recruitment screener and discussion guide) and draft and final reports, and attend a wash-up meeting with lpsos.

Dietary Health Team Lead) will review the report for final sign off. This will need to be acknowledged in the project timelines. FSA colleagues can block out diary time for review in advance once we receive the project timelines and must be made aware of any slippage in timings.

Accessibility Lead) will review the report and infographic for final sign off from an accessibility perspective ahead of publication.

(Social Science) is the call off contract lead so will oversee the project from a call-off perspective and will also be the social research lead for this project. Will attend all project meetings and work closely with the and throughout the project. She will review the work package response, fieldwork materials (including recruitment screener and discussion guide), input into analysis requirements and review and sign off draft reports in collaboration with the and

(Communications) will be responsible for the upload and publish of the report and infographic to the FSA website. will check the messaging and develop a communications plan to socialise the content.

For each part of the project, what is FSA's role and what is lpsos' role?

- We would like Ipsos to provide the names, roles and responsibilities of the team who will be working on this research project. This includes any other colleagues who will be involved in the design, conducting interviews, and analysis and reporting. In addition to a main point of contact/s we would like to understand who will be working on the project during potential annual leave periods.
- 2. Ipsos will be required to meet regularly with the FSA on an agreed time schedule to ensure project timelines are being met and to discuss the progress of the project. We suggest weekly updates via a call or an email, particularly during the recruitment and fieldwork stage to keep updated on progress and sample numbers. We would also like to meet to discuss analysis and top line findings / key themes before reporting commences to ensure we are aware of the findings and that we are aligned on the reporting approach.
- 3. Ipsos will be responsible for recruitment and reaching out to businesses in the form of a signed letter by the FSA. The letter will authenticate and provide detail on the nature of the research.

- Developing discussion guide In order to facilitate the gathering of qualitative data, Ipsos will develop a discussion guide from the previously drafted quantitative survey working closely with FSA for review and sign off
- 5. Obtaining sample Ipsos will be responsible for obtaining the sample of food manufacturer participants. The sample should be reflective of the NI food manufacturing sector. FSA would like direction and a recommended approach from Ipsos for how to identify which employees to interview in each business as they would likely require some technical food knowledge. Ipsos are invited to detail an approach or screening process to ensure we are speaking to relevant employees in terms of role and level of seniority to ensure the questions can be answered accurately and effectively. This is likely to vary from business to business depending on size and sector.
- 6. Data collection Ipsos will be responsible for contacting participants and collecting the data using the discussion guide.
- 7. Analysis of qualitative data- Ipsos will be responsible for analysing qualitative data. We ask Ipsos to include an analysis plan in their response.
- 8. Report writing/infographic development Ipsos will be responsible for writing the report and developing a number of case studies for inclusion in the report. These case studies will ideally be anonymous but we would like to include basic profiling if possible (e.g. type and size of business). Please address this in the response in terms of handling anonymity and whether this is feasible. Ipsos are also required to develop an infographic to showcase key findings of the report, the detail of which will be decided by the FSA once the first report draft has been received. An example of topics that may be included in the infographic are 1) key themes in barriers to reformulation 2) support or guidance that we can offer, 3) top 3 business priorities.
- 9. Review FSA will review each draft of the report and infographic and provide feedback to Ipsos who will be required to action amends. The FSA will provide the final sign-off on outputs. We would like Ipsos to provide a total of 3 drafts for FSA review before final sign off. Before reporting starts, FSA and Ipsos will agree a draft report template. The first draft will be reviewed by the core FSA team (means the provided by the FSA core team and relevant FSA senior stakeholders. The third draft will incorporate these final changes which will be signed off for final report publication. This will need to be built into the project timelines as part of the response.

- Would the FSA like to observe any data collection?

The FSA will not be required to observe data collection.

- Will this need to be peer reviewed?

A full peer review is not necessary for this research project due to the nature of the project (small scale) and restrictions on budget. Additionally, both FSA policy and Social Science team members and the Ipsos research team will be quality assuring to ensure robustness. Another member of the Social Science team at FSA will review (in addition to **member**). Please could Ipsos include details of quality

assurance processes in terms of the design and analysis and reporting of the research, including review by the core team and/or other team members.

Analysis and review – please include:

- We do not have any specific preferences for data analysis but would like lpsos to include an overview of the planned analysis approach in the response. If this research is repeated in the future, it is important that the same analysis approach is used. Therefore, we ask lpsos to record in detail the analysis approach and steps used to ensure this could be replicated in the future. The FSA will liaise with lpsos to agree on this plan, if the initial report is received well.

Stakeholder involvement – please include:

The primary stakeholders for this research are food businesses, therefore the outputs must be appropriate and relevant for this type of audience- i.e. easy to read, concise and visually appealing. The full list of secondary stakeholders are detailed below in the Dissemination section.

The key FSA project team (**Construction** will be involved throughout the research to provide review and internal sign off of the recruitment screener, discussion guide and report. Where necessary, other internal stakeholders from the dietary health team may be involved in reviewing the report (as detailed in above section).

Other stakeholders or organisations who might be interested in this research include academics and non-government organisations who work in or are interested in healthier food reformulation such as Bite Back or Action on Sugar.

- Who are the primary and secondary stakeholders for this research? (Please consider internal FSA, other Government departments etc)
- How will the stakeholders be involved in each stage of research? (e.g. signoff, review)
- Who else might be interested in this research? (Please consider the public, non-government organisations, academics etc)

Outputs and key deliverables– (NB. all outputs must be in line with FSA brand guidelines and meet FSA accessibility requirements)

- What outputs would be needed for this project?
- Are different outputs need for each of the stakeholders identified?

The FSA requires a publishable, accessible report that meets the <u>FSA brand</u> <u>guidelines</u> and the <u>FSA accessibility requirements</u>. The 2024 report will be uploaded to the FSA website as a PDF and in HTML format. Ipsos are not required to provide the report in HTML format.

Outputs include:

• Report (must meet accessibility requirements (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 at Level AA) and will be published on the FSA website). The FSA

will require a Microsoft Word version of the report so it can be uploaded in HTML format on the FSA website. This will be the main report summarising the key findings and in-depth research findings. We are interested in developing a number of case studies from the interviews, which we would like to include in the report. We would like a meeting with Ipsos to discuss the interviews of interest and from this will select those to include as case studies within the report, ensuring a representative mix of case studies. To avoid issues with anonymity we would likely select cast studies that are broadly reflective of the NI food industry rather than businesses that are involved with producing niche food products for example. Please could Ipsos provide details or recommendations for how to deal with anonymity for this case study approach.

• One key finding infographic (must meet the same accessibility requirements and will be published on the FSA website). This must be provided in PDF format with alternative text, correct colour contrast and appropriate tagging structure.

Dissemination

- What are your plans for publication and dissemination of this research?

The outcomes of this research will be published on the FSA website and shared widely with various stakeholders including the food industry, trade associations, other government organisations and academia.

A full list of stakeholders can be found below:

Key stakeholders:

External:

- Making Food Better Steering Group
- Knowledge Provider Working Group
- Reduction and Reformulation Group
- FSA Retail Forum Group
- Invest Northern Ireland
- NI local council Food and Nutrition subgroup
- Food in Schools group
- Calorie Wise Champion group
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland
- NI Department of Health
- NI Universities
- NI Healthy Living Centres
- NI Public Health Dieticians group
- Regional Obesity Prevention Implementation Group
- Safefood
- Consumer Council for NI
- Nutritionist in Industry Group

Internal:

- NI Dietary Health Team
- Social Science Team

- Communications Team
- Science and Surveillance Team
- How will the outputs be shared with the identified stakeholders, and who will be responsible for this?

The Dietary Health Team and Science and Surveillance Team will be responsible for sharing the outputs of this research with the external stakeholders listed. The Making Food Better Steering Group, the Knowledge Provider Working Group and the FSA Retail Forum are made up of representatives from the food industry and/or third level higher education institutions across NI, as well as other providers of specialist food product improvement knowledge and expertise. The members of these groups work directly or indirectly with the NI food industry, and therefore provide the FSA with the ideal medium to disseminate the findings of the research to motivate this industry to engage with reformulation. The FSA have established strong professional relationships with the NI local councils who also play a pivotal role in disseminating food product improvement messaging on behalf of the FSA to the NI food industry.

In addition, the findings of the research will be shared with other partners including the UK Reduction and Reformulation group, *Safe*food, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Consumer Council for NI, the Nutritionist in Industry Group, NI Healthy Living Centres, Northern Ireland Public Health Dieticians group and the Regional Obesity Prevention Implementation Group to share the findings across organisations who also have a remit or interest in this area.

- Which aspects of dissemination would you like lpsos to support with?

Ipsos will not be required to support with dissemination to stakeholders. FSA will share the report on the day of publication as per list of participants provided by Ipsos. However, as part of the incentive for businesses to take part we want to share the findings with the participants at an early stage upon publication of findings. Ipsos will need to support with this element as they will be engaging with the participating businesses during recruitment and fieldwork and will therefore need to follow up with them after.

- What platforms/activities do you plan to use to promote this publication? When will each of these take place?

Social media: Twitter and LinkedIn will be used to sign post to the publication. This is expected to take place in the weeks after publication.

MFB newsletter: The publication will be sign posted in our MFB newsletter (biannually). This will take place in the edition of the newsletter after publication.

Stakeholder meetings: Key findings of the report will be shared at stakeholder meetings such as the knowledge provider group and the MFB Steering Group meeting.

Timescale milestones – Using the template below as a guide, please outline any deadlines for this project, noting the reason for any hard deadlines (e.g. board meetings, which cannot be moved).

Please include any deadlines that occur after the project is complete (for example, known presentations, meetings or briefings that will use the findings).

Please also include a wash up meeting for feedback on the project.

Project timelines should account for annual leave/bank holidays, and enough time for relevant stakeholders to review/comment/sign off materials.

Project Milestone	Due date	Notes (please include who is responsible for each deadline, and any annual leave)
Work package issued	14 th June 2023	FSA
Work package submission date	29 th June 2023	IPSOS
Review work package response, provide feedback / ask questions, and final work package response amended and signed off	w/c 3 rd July	FSA / Ipsos
Project commission	7 th July 2023 or w/c 10 th July	FSA / Ipsos
off	3 rd July, 6 th July, 7 th July, and w/c 10 th July.	
Final report signed off by FSA for publication	12 th January 2024	FSA



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Annex 1 – SIC codes

10.1 Processing and preserving of meat and production of meat products

10.13 Production of meat and poultry meat products

10.3 Processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables

- 10.31 Processing and preserving of potatoes
- 10.32 Manufacture of fruit and vegetable juice
- 10.39 Other processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables

10.4 Manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats

10.42 Manufacture of margarine and similar edible fats

10.5 Manufacture of dairy products

- 10.51/9 Manufacture of milk products (other than liquid milk and cream, butter, cheese) n.e.c.
- 10.52 Manufacture of ice cream

10.6 Manufacture of grain mill products, starches and starch products

- 10.61 Manufacture of grain mill products
- 10.61/1 Grain milling
- 10.61/2 Manufacture of breakfast cereals and cereals-based foods

10.7 Manufacture of bakery and farinaceous products

- 10.71 Manufacture of bread; manufacture of fresh pastry goods and cakes
- **10.72** Manufacture of rusks and biscuits; manufacture of preserved pastry goods and cakes
- 10.73 Manufacture of macaroni, noodles, couscous and similar farinaceous products

10.8 Manufacture of other food products

- 10.82 Manufacture of cocoa, chocolate and sugar confectionery
- 10.82/1 Manufacture of cocoa, and chocolate confectionery
- 10.82/2 Manufacture of sugar confectionery
- 10.84 Manufacture of condiments and seasonings
- 10.85 Manufacture of prepared meals and dishes
- 10.89 Manufacture of other food products n.e.c.



