unicef
for every child

Implementing Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages:

An overview of current approaches and the potential benefits for children

Implementing Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages:

An overview of current approaches and the potential benefits for children

March 2019

Contents

01 **Introduction** 4

1.1 **Key Terms** 5

02 **Case studies** 6

2.1 **France:** Beverage tax implemented in 2012, refined in 2018 7

2.2 **Mexico:** Evidence so far points to extended reductions in consumption 8

2.3 **Hungary:** Tax on unhealthy products aims to reduce consumption and strengthen the health-care system 9

2.4 **Norway:** Taxes set to raise revenues, cross-border shopping becomes common 10

03 **Global status summary** 11

04 **Broad-spectrum conclusions** 13

05 **Tables:** Details on taxes implemented in the case study countries 14

06 **Endnotes** 15

07 **Acknowledgements and copyright** 19

01 Introduction

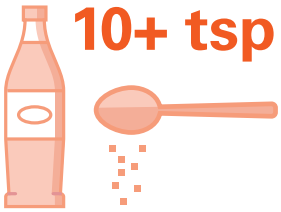
Why this is important for children

340 million
children and adolescents aged 5–19 are **overweight or obese.**

Children aged 2–18 should have less than **25 grams**, or **6 teaspoons**, of added sugars a day and children under age 2 should not have any at all.[6]

>6 tsp

of added sugars



10+ tsp

The average **can of sugary drink** contains around **40 grams** of free sugars, equivalent to **10 teaspoons** of table sugar.

Many countries are looking for ways to promote healthy diets as a vital priority in the drive to prevent and control non-communicable diseases (NCDs). To support this goal, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a technical meeting report in 2016. Its guidance on how to design fiscal policies aiming to reduce rates of obesity concluded that the strongest health effects will result from taxes that raise the retail price of beverages with added sugar by at least 20 per cent.[1]

While illness and deaths resulting from NCDs occur mainly in adults, the exposure to risks begins in childhood.[2] Extensive evidence associates consumption of added sugars with multiple health risks for children, including diabetes, tooth decay and obesity.[3]

Extensive evidence associates consumption of added sugars with multiple health risks for children, including diabetes, tooth decay and obesity.[3]

As of 2016, an estimated 340 million of the world's children and adolescents aged 5–19 were overweight or obese, affecting 18 per cent of this population – up from 4 per cent in 1975.[4] Children with the highest intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are more likely to be overweight or obese than children with a low intake.[5]

Scientific standards specify that children aged 2–18 should have less than 25 grams, or 6 teaspoons, of added sugars a day and children under age 2 should not have any at all.[6] The average can of sugary drink contains around 40 grams of free sugars, equivalent to 10 teaspoons of table sugar – and consumption is increasing among children and adolescents.[7] As noted in the 2018 Global Nutrition Report, although 30 per cent of all school-age children do not eat any fruit daily, 44 per cent drink soda every day.[8]

30% of all school-age children do not eat fruit daily, 44 per cent drink soda every day.[8]

Reducing children's intake of sugar-sweetened beverages may be the single simplest way to avoid a major source of excess calories in their daily diet.

Soda, in particular, is readily identified as having high sugar content, unlike sources of 'hidden' sugars such as bread, soup or ketchup. This can make it easier for parents and children to consider a healthier alternative. In addition, the calories that sodas contain are entirely 'empty', offering no healthy nutritional benefits.

Another notable factor is that the health benefits of reducing SSB intake are likely to have the greatest impact on the lowest-income child populations, who are at the highest risk of obesity in many societies.[9]

Soda, in particular, is readily identified as having high sugar content, unlike sources of 'hidden' sugars such as bread, soup or ketchup.

This briefing note explores how countries are implementing taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages, whether separately or as part of broader levies on products with high sugar, salt or fat content. It offers four country case studies, followed by a synopsis of developments in other countries and a set of general conclusions drawn from these experiences. In addition, the footnotes offer links to a wide range of valuable resources, including guidelines, research and policy reports.

1.1 Key terms:

added sugars – any type of sugar used as an ingredient in processed/prepared foods and sugars eaten separately or added to foods at the table; sucrose and high-fructose corn syrup, for example, are frequently added to beverages[a]

free sugars – monosaccharides and disaccharides added to foods by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, and sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit-juice concentrates[b]

disaccharides – 'double sugars', e.g., sucrose, which is commonly known as 'table sugar' and is derived from sugar cane or beets

monosaccharides – 'simple sugars', e.g., glucose and fructose, which combine to form sucrose

intrinsic sugars – in contrast to 'free sugars', these are found in whole fruits and vegetables; the WHO guideline on sugar intake found no evidence of adverse health effects from their consumption[c]

sugar-sweetened beverages, or sugary drinks – beverages containing added caloric sweeteners, such as sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup or fruit-juice concentrates,[d] also defined "as all types of beverages containing free sugars,"[e] including carbonates ('fizzy' drinks), non-carbonated soft drinks, energy and sports drinks, 'vitamin water', flavoured water or milk, iced tea and ready-to-drink coffee, fruit drinks and lemonade

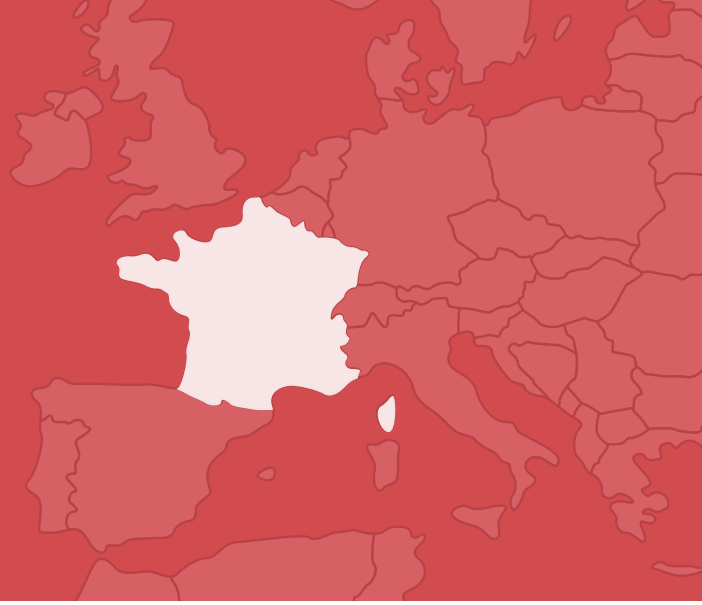
[a] American Heart Association, 'Added Sugars and Cardiovascular Disease Risk in Children', *Circulation*, vol. 135, no. 19, 9 May 2017, pp. e1017–e1034. **[b]** World Health Organization, 'Information Note about Intake of Sugars Recommended in the WHO Guideline for Adults and Children', WHO, Geneva, 2015, p. 1. **[c]** Ibid. **[d]** World Health Organization, 'Fiscal Policies for Diet and Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases', WHO, Geneva, 2016, p. 8. **[e]** World Health Organization, 'Taxes on Sugary Drinks', WHO, Geneva, 2017, p. 1.

02 Case studies[10]

These concise case studies on France, Mexico, Hungary and Norway outline the background and purpose of the tax, revenues generated, effects on consumption, and public or industry reactions to introduction of the tax.

France | **Mexico** | **Hungary** | **Norway**

France: Beverage tax implemented in 2012, refined in 2018



August 2011

Government proposes new SSB tax

1 January 2012

EUR 0.07 (USD 0.08) per litre tax on sugar-sweetened and artificially sweetened beverages comes into force, to be increased annually in line with the consumer price index

1 July 2018

Applies excise tax based on the sugar content of sweetened drinks, e.g., 5 grams of added sugar per litre taxed at EUR 0.055 (USD 0.630) per litre, 10 grams at EUR 0.135 (USD 0.155)

The Government of France first proposed an SSB excise duty in 2011. The intention was to tax beverages with added sugar as a way to reduce consumption, reduce obesity, and offset the rising costs of health insurance over time. In initial reactions, it was found that the public generally agreed soft drinks are not a healthy option and did not raise major objections to the tax. The industry, however, maintained that it should only be referred to as a way to raise revenues and objected to any connection to public health. The Government yielded and extended the tax to all soft drinks regardless of their sugar content.[11]

Introducing a tax on artificially sweetened drinks at the same level as sugar-sweetened drinks – and charging by volume rather than sugar content – meant that consumers had limited economic incentive to avoid sugary drinks, and the industry was not encouraged to reformulate drinks to contain less sugar.[12] While exports were exempt, the tax was levied on French producers, importers and food outlets serving prepared drinks with added sugar or sweeteners, which mainly affects fast food chains. (Details on products and exemptions are set out in Table 1, page 14.)

In 2011, the tax was expected to generate EUR 120 million (USD 138 million).[13] The objective for revenues collected in 2013 was EUR 280 million (USD 321 million), but the actual amount reached EUR 375 million (USD 430 million) and targeted social security, particularly the national health insurance.[14] This suggests that the reduction in consumption was smaller than predicted. During 2012 and 2013 combined, the demand for regular cola and diet cola decreased by nearly equal proportions, of 6.7 per cent and 6.1 per cent, respectively.[15]

Measures to reduce SSB consumption are continuing in France. In January 2017, a law was introduced to ban restaurants from offering unlimited refills of soft drinks for free or a fixed price. A sliding-scale excise tax in proportion to the sugar content of sweetened beverages has been in effect since July 2018. The Minister of Health publicly supported this measure, describing it as "a simple reform of a tax to make it more effective."[16] The early impacts were seen as strong, with some manufacturers significantly reducing the sugar content of popular beverages in response to the new tax arrangement.[17]

Mexico: Evidence so far points to extended reductions in consumption

11 December 2012

Initiative for tax on sugar-sweetened beverages presented to legislature

31 October 2013

Senate endorses proposed tax on sugar-sweetened drinks; energy-dense foods added through a congressional initiative

1 January 2014

Tax on sugar-sweetened beverages and energy-dense foods comes into force

On 1 January 2014, the Mexican Government implemented the Special Production and Services Tax (IEPS) on non-alcoholic beverages with added sugar and non-essential energy-dense foods – both as a strategy to fight the obesity epidemic and to raise revenues.

The tax on soft drinks is levied at a fixed rate per litre of product; the taxes on energy drinks and high-calorie snacks are charged according to the value of the product (ad valorem). The tax is paid by the producer or importer of the taxed product; there are no exemptions or relief for small producers. (Details on products and exemptions are set out in Table 2, page 14.)

Between 2014 and 2018, IEPS generated a total of Mexican Peso (MXN) 107.2 billion (USD 5.6 billion).[18] Alongside the IEPS, the Government also introduced a mass-media information campaign to promote healthy habits and implemented other measures at the national level, including regulation of unhealthy food and drinks in schools, restrictions on marketing targeted to children, and increased access to drinking water.[19]

Consumption of taxed beverages decreased 5.5 per cent in 2014 and 9.7 per cent in 2015, while consumption of untaxed beverages increased by 2.1 per cent over both years. There were significant declines in purchases of taxed beverages by households in all socio-economic levels, with the reductions among the poorest at 11.7 per cent, compared to 7.6 per cent for the general population.[20]

Proponents of the SSB tax noted that 70 per cent of Mexicans supported the tax when it was proposed, if revenues were used to promote health. In later national opinion polls, 52 per cent of respondents said they consumed fewer sugary drinks in 2014 and had greater awareness about sugar-sweetened beverages as a contributor to obesity.[21]

The industry as a whole presented a united front against the tax, with activism including advertising campaigns, and lobbying of government and other regulatory entities. Various arguments were advanced by the soft drinks industry, including the responsibility of consumers to adopt healthier lifestyles, and the consequences on local sugar cane producers and employment. In 2015, the national soft drink makers' association stated that 1,700 jobs had been lost as a result of the tax.[22]

In its rebuttal to the claim that employment would be reduced, the Pan American Health Organization acknowledged that just one major multinational beverage company created more than 93,000 direct and 800,000 indirect jobs in Mexico, in 2011. But, if jobs were lost, they would be replaced through several factors, including transfers to other sectors as the SSB tax encourages consumption of substitute beverages and foods, and investments – for example, in health care – that could be made using the revenue collected through the tax.[23]

Hungary: Tax on unhealthy products aims to reduce consumption and strengthen the health-care system

11 July 2011

Hungarian Parliament passes Act CIII on the Public Health Product Tax

19 July 2011

Public Health Product Tax is publicized

1 September 2011

Public Health Product Tax comes into effect, and has been amended frequently

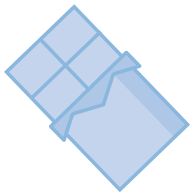
In 2011, Hungary introduced the Public Health Product Tax (NETA) to increase revenue for health care and reduce consumption of products associated with proven health risks, including those containing high levels of sugar, salt and fat. The tax was established with the explicit aim to address the country's high prevalence of overweight and obesity,[24] with other measures – such as awareness campaigns and regulations promoting healthy eating in schools – introduced around the same time.

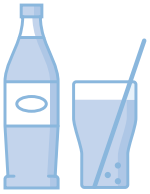
This tax is charged per litre or kilogram, and is payable by the first supplier in Hungary; small suppliers, selling less than 50 litres/kilograms of taxable product per year, are exempt, as are exports. (Details on products and exemptions are set out in Table 3, page 15.) Statistics submitted to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development show the tax generated Hungarian Forint (HUF) 122 billion (USD 436 million) during 2011–2016.[25] In 2014, Hungary's Prime Minister stated that revenues were used, for example, to fund pay raises for around 100,000 doctors and nurses.[26]

Industry reactions emphasize that sales and revenue have been impacted by both NETA, as it increased value-added tax costs 25–27 per cent when it came into effect, and the substantial increases in prices of raw materials.[27] The national confectionary association points out that domestic companies are more affected than multinationals, leading to job losses and restricting funds for research and development of healthier products.[28]

Though the public also has generally negative views of the tax, the first assessment by the National Institute for Food and Nutrition Science, published in 2013, found that sales of taxed products – especially carbonated beverages, sweets and nuts – dropped by 27 per cent and consumption decreased by 20–35 per cent. In addition, it has expanded consumer awareness and changed attitudes towards less healthy foods, and many manufacturers have reformulated their products to remove or reduce taxed ingredients.[29]

Norway: Taxes set to raise revenues, cross-border shopping becomes common





1922

Tax on chocolate products introduced to boost state income

1981

Tax extended to sugar-sweetened beverages

1 January 2018

Sugar tax increased by as much as 83% for some products

Norway has had a form of sugar tax since 1922, and this was not viewed negatively for a number of years. However, the latest tax increase on chocolate and sugar products, at 83 per cent, and concentrates, at 42.3 per cent, has been heavily criticized. The taxes are charged per litre or kilogram of the sold product; there is no exemption for small producers. Manufacturers and importers are liable to pay the tax, although it is ultimately borne by consumers through higher prices. (Details on products and exemptions are set out in Table 4, page 15.)

In 2016, the tax on chocolate and sweets raised Norwegian Krone (NOK) 1.46 billion (USD 170 million), the tax on sugar raised NOK 203 million (USD 24 million) and the tax on non-alcoholic beverages raised NOK 2.03 billion (USD 238 million).[30] The revenues go to the exchequer, and can be used for any purpose – there is no requirement or initiative for revenues to be used for health-related policies.

Regarding health effects, the evidence so far is limited, but at least two studies have found that SSB consumption declined among children and adolescents. This research examines the tax as part of other changes – including initiatives by Norwegian health authorities to restrict the marketing of sugar-rich beverages and food aimed to children and recommending that soft drinks should not be available in schools.[31]

Cross-border shopping has increased by 45 per cent since 2008, and now totals around USD 1.87 billion annually. It has been estimated that Norwegians buy 20 per cent of their soda in Sweden each year, with many consumers buying soft drinks in Sweden, where there is no sugar tax on such products. In addition, Swedish shops near the Norwegian border have been found to deliberately drop their prices to attract Norwegian customers.[32]

Industry critics have argued that higher sugar prices threaten competitiveness, and maintain that thousands of direct and indirect jobs have been lost as a result of cross-border trade. Norwegian producers have also fought the sugar tax for several years on the grounds that it is ineffective in promoting public health. And there are some concerns that the tax is a threat to ongoing government-industry cooperation to encourage healthier diets, which includes replacing sugary snacks with fruit and vegetables at supermarket checkouts, as well as commitments to develop products with less sugar.

Global status summary 03

In the wake of success with taxes on tobacco, there are strong movements to make SSB taxes an essential policy tool within comprehensive plans to promote public health.[33] **By the end of 2018, more than 40 countries were applying some type of tax to sugary drinks,**[34] including Bahrain, Barbados,[35] Belgium, Bermuda, Brunei, Chile,[36] Dominica, Ecuador, Fiji, French Polynesia, India, Ireland, Kiribati, Peru, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

By the end of 2018, more than
40 countries
were applying some type of tax to sugary drinks

Philippines:

The **Philippines** introduced SSB taxes in January 2018, raising prices by 14 per cent and aiming to reduce obesity and raise revenues for government infrastructure projects, including sports facilities, public schools and drinking water in public places.[37] The taxes apply to drinks that combine non-caloric sweeteners with sugar/high-fructose corn syrup and are levied by product volume rather than sugar content – so there is little incentive for manufacturers to reformulate products. When sales dropped significantly during the first six months after implementation, beverage companies increased retail prices.[38]

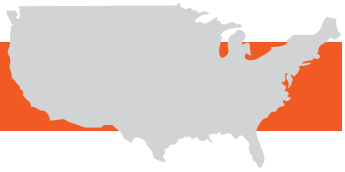
South Africa:

In **South Africa**, an SSB tax was announced in 2016, approved in 2017 and implemented in 2018, despite extensive opposition from the industry.[39] Beverages with 4 grams or less of added sugar are exempt. South Africa has the highest obesity levels in sub-Saharan Africa, and the Government aims to reduce this by 10 per cent, by 2020. The Healthy Living Alliance, a national alliance of organizations devoted to promoting health and reducing obesity rates, maintained it was a positive step, but the tax rate of 11 per cent was too low to be effective.[40]

United Kingdom:

The **United Kingdom's** soft drinks industry levy was announced in 2016 and came into force in April 2018. The tax rate is lower for soft drinks with less sugar content per litre; drinks with no added sugar are exempt. Between the announcement and introduction, around 50 per cent of manufacturers reported reducing sugar levels in their products. Revenues were projected to be GPB 240 million (USD 308 million) a year, aimed to reduce childhood obesity with portions to be used for school sports facilities and physical education equipment.[41]

United States:



In the **United States,** where sugar-sweetened beverages are the largest source of added sugar, as well as the chief source of energy intake in diets across the population, the prevalence of childhood obesity has more than doubled over the past 30 years.[42] Although SSB taxes designed to reduce obesity were implemented then repealed in Chicago,[43] they are currently applied in a few other major cities. The city of Berkeley, Calif., applied the world's highest SSB tax – up to 25 per cent – in 2015, and sales of sugary beverages dropped 21 per cent in low-income neighbourhoods.[44] Notably, the tax in Philadelphia, Pa., is tied directly to early childhood development, with revenues used to expand preschool programmes and invest in public parks, recreation centres and libraries.[45]

Countries that have rejected SSB taxes include:

Australia:

Despite broad public support,[46] the Government of Australia has repeatedly rejected a tax on soft drinks with added sugar, and key legislators have suggested that exercise is the more appropriate response to reducing obesity. Both sides of the argument point to Mexico's experience with taxing sugary drinks in defence of their position, with proponents noting the drop in sales, while opponents emphasize job losses. Australia's national obesity rate, meanwhile, has escalated from 10 per cent in 1980 to 28 per cent in 2018.[47]

Colombia:

A 20 per cent tax on soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages was proposed by Colombia's health minister, in March 2016, backed by the President and the Ministry of Finance. The tax was designed to bring USD 340 million a year into the national health system and reduce sugar consumption in a country where soft drinks are often cheaper than bottled water. Although 70 per cent of Colombians supported the tax, only 42 legislators out of 268 publicly expressed their support.[48] Proposals for the tax were dropped in December 2016.

Denmark:

After having SSB taxes in place since the 1930s, and introducing the world's first tax on saturated fats in 2011, the Danish Government has reversed both policies. Elimination of the soft drinks tax was announced in 2013, with the stated intention of bolstering employment and the economy.[49] While broad evidence supported the 'fat tax' introduction as a way to reduce overweight and obesity, the Government later pointed to economic concerns such as an increase in cross-border trade. In the public response, the tax lacked legitimacy, possibly related to the fact that taxes on healthier foods were not reduced.[50] It was abolished in January 2013.

Slovenia:

In October 2014, Slovenia's Finance Ministry published a draft bill proposing an excise duty on non-alcoholic beverages with more than 10 grams of added or natural sugars per litre. After significant opposition, the bill was withdrawn from the 2015 budget proposal. The industry argued that the tax would restrict development in rural areas, and that it would be forced to move production outside the country. Further, the motives of the tax were questioned, as revenue was not directed towards increasing consumer awareness. There was also a fear that young people would turn to alcohol, which would have become cheaper than soft drinks.[51]

Broad-spectrum conclusions 04

Far from forming a coherent movement to raise prices by at least 20 per cent, with the intention to reduce consumption, every country mentioned in this briefing note has taken its own approach to taxing sugar-sweetened beverages. And for most of them, the tax rates are much lower than recommended.

Experiences described in this briefing note further indicate that:

- The advance time between announcing a tax and setting it into force is a window of opportunity for raising public awareness of the health benefits, and a chance for companies to lower sugar content in their products.
- Public response is typically more favourable when it is clear that the purpose is to promote good health.
- Taxing artificial sweeteners at the same level as sugar weakens the health-promoting intent, and lowers incentives for beverage makers to create new, low-calorie options for consumers.
- Regardless of the stated purpose of the tax, or the immediate changes it encourages in consumer choices and consumption, SSB taxes are raising significant revenues. Countries in all regions and of all income levels would gain long-term benefits by investing these funds in stronger health-care systems, as well as expanded programmes to encourage healthy diets and more physically active life styles among children, adolescents and adults.

As noted in the 2018 Global Nutrition Report, while policies and programmes for healthy diets – including SSB taxes and product reformulation policies – are proving to be effective in countries, municipalities and communities, the delivery of holistic packages is inadequate.[52] Of the 167 countries reporting to WHO's review of nutrition-related policies, the most common measure is a levy on sugar-sweetened beverages.[53] But few countries have clearly defined the tax bases for encouraging healthier behaviours, and 72 per cent did not have any type of fiscal policy to promote healthy diets.[54]

This is an area that is being watched keenly by the public and private sectors alike. In the heat of debate, it is important to remember that most countries that have introduced SSB taxes for health reasons, rather than revenue raising, have introduced them during the past decade – including a fleet of new entries in 2018. The evidence connecting sugary drinks to overweight and obesity is already clear. But the true effects of the taxes as a pathway to reducing childhood obesity will take time to appear and be measured.

A holistic approach will facilitate and promote eating healthy foods and participating in physical activity during early childhood and through the school-age years, along with carefully targeted fiscal policies. In the broader context, effective and sustainable efforts to avert the NCDs that result from malnutrition will consider underlying systems and environmental factors. These include the full scale of the food production, distribution and marketing cycles, agricultural practices, climate change and food security, and the social networks that affect children's access to and consumption of the nutritious foods that sustain life and well-being.[55]

05 **Tables:** Details on taxes implemented in the case study countries[56]

France | Mexico | Hungary | Norway

Table 1. France

Product	Tax per litre or kilogram	Exemptions
Sugar and artificially sweetened drinks	EUR 0.075 (USD 0.09) per litre in 2017, increased each year in line with the consumer price index	- Alcohol strength over 1.2% (0.5% for beer) - Milk-based and medicinal drinks - Soup
Energy drinks	EUR 1 (USD 1.23) per litre	- Caffeine content less than 220 milligrams per litre

Table 2. Mexico

Product	Tax per litre or kilogram	Exemptions
Flavoured drinks – and concentrates, powders and syrups used to prepare flavoured drinks – containing added sugar	MXN 1 (USD 0.05) per litre	- Alcoholic drinks - Milk, oral electrolyte solutions and drinks with medicinal purposes
Energy drinks – and concentrates, powders and syrups used to prepare energy drinks – containing >20 milligrams of caffeine (and certain other chemicals) per 100 millilitres	25% ad valorem tax	- Alcoholic drinks
Snacks, confectionery products, chocolate and other products derived from cacao, flans and puddings, fruit and vegetable-derived sweets (e.g., jam, marmalade), peanut and hazelnut butters, dulce de leche, cereal-based processed foods, ice cream and popsicles – in each case containing >275 kilocalories per 100 grams	8% ad valorem tax	N/A

Table 3. Hungary

Product	Tax per litre or kilogram	Exemptions
Soft drinks containing >8 grams added sugar per 100 millilitres Syrups/concentrates containing >8 grams added sugar per 100 millilitres	HUF 7 (USD 0.03) per litre HUF 200 (USD 0.79) per litre	- Products containing at least 25% fruit or vegetable content - Products containing at least 50% milk or its derivatives
Energy drinks containing certain chemicals	HUF 250 (USD 0.98) per litre	N/A
Cocoa powder containing >40 grams sugar per 100 grams	HUF 70 (USD 0.28) per kilogram	- Products with no added sugar - Products containing at least 40 grams per 100 grams cocoa content
Chocolate containing >40 grams sugar per 100 grams	HUF 130 (USD 0.51) kilogram	- Products with no added sugar - Products containing at least 40 grams per 100 grams cocoa content
Pre-packaged products containing >25 grams sugar per 100 grams	HUF 130 (USD 0.51) per kilogram	- Products with no added sugar
Snacks containing >1 gram salt per 100 grams and condiments containing >5 grams salt per 100 grams	HUF 250 (USD 0.98) per kilogram	- Mustard, ketchup and other vegetable products with <15 grams salt per 100 grams
Flavoured alcohol containing >5 grams added sugar per 100 millilitres	HUF 20 (USD 0.08) per litre	- Spirits - Medicines - Herbal drinks
Marmalades containing >35 grams sugar per 100 grams	HUF 500 (USD 1.96) per kilogram	- Products with no added sugar

Table 4. Norway

Product	Tax per litre or kilogram	Exemptions
Sugars, including granulated sugar, powdered sugar, rock candy, sugar cubes, pearl sugar and sugar solutions from these products	NOK 7.93 (USD 0.98) per kilogram	- Glucose, molasses, milk sugar (lactose), honey, toffee, caramel, diabetes sugar, 100% maple syrup and fondant powder
Chocolate and sugar products, and some sugar-free products akin to sugar products, e.g., pastilles and chewing gum, with or without other artificial sweeteners	NOK 36.92 (USD 4.59) per kilogram	- Cookies and bakery products, marzipan and ice cream - Products in which chocolate and sugar are included as a raw material, such as ice cream and baking products – but biscuits and waffles that contain more than 50% chocolate/sugar or are fully covered in chocolate/fondant, etc., are taxed
Non-alcoholic beverages (with or without added sugar)	NOK 4.75 (USD 0.59) per litre	- Powder-based products - Milk products containing up to 15 grams added sugar per litre
Concentrates and syrups with added sugar	NOK 28.91 (USD 3.59) per litre	- Concentrates and syrups based on fruits, berries or vegetables with no added sugar or sweetener are taxed at a lower rate (shown below)
Concentrates and syrups based on fruits, berries or vegetables with no added sugar or sweetener	NOK 10.32 (USD 1.28) per litre	
Juices based on fruits, berries or vegetables with no added sugar or sweetener	NOK 1.70 (USD 0.21) per litre	

06 Endnotes

1. World Health Organization, 'Fiscal Policies for Diet and Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases', Technical Meeting Report, 5–6 May 2015, WHO, Geneva, 2016, pp. 9, 24, available at <www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/fiscal-policies-diet-prevention/en>.
2. World Health Organization, 'Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, 2013–2020', Resolution WHA66.10, WHO, Geneva, 2013, p. 7, available at <www.who.int/nmh/events/ncd_action_plan/en>.
3. See, for example: Delli Bovi, et al., 'Obesity and Obesity Related Diseases, Sugar Consumption and Bad Oral Health: A fatal epidemic mixture', Translational Medicine @ UniSA, vol. 16, no. 2, 2017, pp. 11–16.
4. World Health Organization, 'Obesity and Overweight', WHO, Geneva, 16 February 2018, <www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>. See, also: World Obesity Federation and World Health Organization, 'Taking Action on Childhood Obesity', WHO, Geneva, 2018, available at <www.who.int/end-childhood-obesity/publications/taking-action-childhood-obesity-report/en>.
5. World Health Organization, 'Information Note about Intake of Sugars Recommended in the WHO Guideline for Adults and Children', WHO, Geneva, 2015, p. 1, available at <www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/sugars_intake/en>.
6. American Heart Association, 'Added Sugars and Cardiovascular Disease Risk in Children', *Circulation*, vol. 135, no. 19, 9 May 2017, pp. e1017–e1034. *For further technical information, see*: World Health Organization, 'Guideline: Sugars intake for adults and children', WHO, Geneva, 2015.
7. World Health Organization, 'Taxes on Sugary Drinks: Why do it?', WHO, Geneva, 2017, p. 1, open PDF from <http://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/260253>.
8. Independent Expert Group of the Global Nutrition Report, *2018 Global Nutrition Report: Shining a light to spur action on nutrition*, Development Initiatives Poverty Research Ltd., Bristol, UK, 2018, p. 16, available at <https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/global-nutrition-report-2018>.
9. Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity, 'Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity', World Health Organization, Geneva, 2016, p. 18, available at <www.who.int/end-childhood-obesity/publications/echo-report/en>. See, also: Childhood Obesity Intervention Cost-Effectiveness Study (CHOICES), 'Brief: Cost-effectiveness of a sugar-sweetened beverage excise tax in 15 U.S. cities', Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, Mass., December 2016, p. 4, available at <http://choicesproject.org/publications/brief-cost-effectiveness-of-sugar-sweetened-beverage-excise-tax-in-15-us-cities>.
10. USD amounts in the case studies reflect currency conversions carried out in January 2019, at <www.xe.com>.
11. Landon, Jane, and Hannah Graff, 'What is the Role of Health-Related Food Duties?', National Heart Forum, London, 2012, p. 21.
12. Power Up for Health, 'Taxing Sweetened Drinks in France', July 2015, p. 2, open PDF from <https://powerupforhealth.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/2015-07-13_case-study-taxing-sweetened-drinks-in-france.pdf>.
13. Spiegel Online, 'French "Cola Tax" Approved: Paris vows to fight deficit and obesity', 29 December 2011, <www.spiegel.de/international/europe/french-cola-tax-approved-paris-vows-to-fight-deficit-and-obesity-a-806194.html>. Note: Currency conversions to USD in the case studies reflect rates in January 2019, as calculated at <www.xe.com>.
14. European Competitiveness and Sustainable Industrial Policy Consortium, *Food Taxes and Their Impact on Competitiveness in the Agri-Food Sector: Annexes to the main report*, Ecorsys, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 12 July 2014, p. 204.
15. European Competitiveness and Sustainable Industrial Policy Consortium, *Food Taxes and Their Impact on Competitiveness in the Agri-Food Sector: Final report*, Ecorsys, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 12 July 2014, p. 36, available at <www.ecorys.com/news/food-taxes-reduce-consumption-products-high-sugar-salt-and-fat>.
16. McPartland, Ben, 'France Tackles Obesity by Hiking "Soda Tax" on Sugary Drinks', The Local France, 27 October 2017, <www.thelocal.fr/20171027/france-tackles-obesity-by-hiking-soda-tax-on-sugary-drinks>.
17. Connexion Journalist, 'Sugary Drinks Tax in France Already Making Impact', *Connexion*, 28 September 2018, <www.connexionfrance.com/French-news/The-sugary-drinks-tax-in-France-already-making-a-positive-impact-says-MP>.
18. Servicio de Administración Tributaria, Ingresos tributarios del Gobierno Federal [Federal Government Tax Revenue], online, accessed 28 January 2018.
19. For an in-depth study of SSB taxes in Mexico, see: Pan American Health Organization, *Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages as a Public Health Strategy: The experience of Mexico*, PAHO, 2015, available at <http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/handle/123456789/18391>.
20. Colchero, M. Arantxa, et al., 'Sustained Consumer Response: Evidence from two-years after implementing the sugar sweetened beverage tax in Mexico', *Health Affairs*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1 March 2017, pp. 564–571, available at <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5442881>.
21. Donaldson, Elisabeth, 'Advocating for Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxation: A case study of Mexico', Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2015, pp. 22, 4, available at <https://ncdalliance.org/news-events/news/advocating-for-sugar-sweetened-beverage-taxation-a-case-study-of-mexico>.

22. Agren, David, 'Mexico's Congress Accused of Caving to Soda Pop Industry in Tax Cut Plan', Guardian, Mexico City, 19 October 2018, <www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/oct/19/mexico-soda-tax-cut-pop-fizzy-drinks>.
23. Pan American Health Organization, *Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages as a Public Health Strategy: The experience of Mexico*, PAHO, 2015, p. 81.
24. In 2014, 28 per cent of adults were obese and 34 per cent were overweight. Source: National Institute for Food and Nutrition Science, 'Assessment of the Impact of a Public Health Product Tax: Final report', WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, November 2015, p. 8, open PDF from <www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/332882/assessment-impact-PH-tax-report.pdf?ua=1>.
25. OECD.Stat, 'Details of Tax Revenue: Hungary', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=REVHUN>, data extracted on 31 May 2017.
26. European Competitiveness and Sustainable Industrial Policy Consortium, *Food Taxes and Their Impact on Competitiveness in the Agri-Food Sector: Annexes to the main report*, Ecorsys, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 12 July 2014, p. 214 (footnote 280).
27. European Competitiveness and Sustainable Industrial Policy Consortium, *Food Taxes and Their Impact on Competitiveness in the Agri-Food Sector: Annexes to the main report*, Ecorsys, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 12 July 2014, p. 27.
28. Nieburg, Oliver, 'Health Tax Discourages Sugar Alternatives, says Hunbisco', Confectionary News.com, 30 October 2014, <www.confectionerynews.com/Article/2014/10/30/Hungary-health-tax-discourages-sugar-alternatives>.
29. WHO Regional Office for Europe 2015, 'Using Price Policies to Promote Healthier Diets', World Health Organization, Copenhagen, 2015, pp. 18, 20–21, available at <www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/using-price-policies-to-promote-healthier-diets-2015>. See, also: National Institute for Food and Nutrition Science, 'Assessment of the Impact of a Public Health Product Tax: Final report', World Health Organization, Copenhagen, November 2015, open PDF from <www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/332882/assessment-impact-PH-tax-report.pdf?ua=1>.
30. OECD.Stat, 'Details of Tax Revenue: Norway', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=REVNOR>, data extracted 2 February 2018.
31. See, for example: Stea, Tonje H., et al., 'Changes in Beverage Consumption in Norwegian Children from 2001 to 2008', Public Health Nutrition, vol. 15, no. 3, 2011, pp. 379–385; and Bolt-Evensen, Kathrine, et al. 'Consumption of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Artificially Sweetened Beverages from Childhood to Adulthood in Relation to Socioeconomic Status: 15 years follow-up in Norway', *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, vol. 15, no. 8, 2018.
32. Criscione, Valeria, 'Sweden Sees Sweet Deal after Norway Levies New Sugar Tax', *Washington Times*, 14 January 2018, <www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/14/norway-boosts-sugar-tax-sweden-sees-sweet-deal>; and Sputnik News.com, 'Norway's Drastic "Sugar Tax" to Prove Sweet Blessing to Neighboring Sweden', 30 November 2017, <https://sputniknews.com/business/201711301059573097-norway-sweden-sugar-tax>.
33. See, for example: Sugar, Tobacco, and Alcohol Taxes Group, 'Sugar, Tobacco, and Alcohol Taxes to Achieve the SDGs' (Comment), Lancet, vol. 391, no. 10138, 16 June 2018, pp. 2400–2401.
34. Silver, Lynn, 'Sugary Drink Taxes: The new normal', World Cancer Research Fund International, London, 20 June 2018, <www.wcrf.org/int/blog/articles/2018/06/sugary-drink-taxes-%E2%80%93-new-normal>. See, also: Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, 'Spotlight on Soda', Harvard University, Boston, Mass., 25 October 2016, <www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2016/10/25/spotlight-on-soda>. For the details on taxes in these countries and others mentioned in this section, see: World Cancer Federation International, 'NOURISHING Framework: Use economic tools to address food affordability and purchase incentives', updated 12 December 2018, <www.wcrf.org/int/policy/nourishing-database?country&policy=2378&action=4524>.
35. Healthy Caribbean Alliance Coalition and NCD Alliance, 'The Implementation of Taxation on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages by the Government of Barbados: A civil society perspective', HCC and NCD, July 2016, available at <www.healthycaribbean.org/hcc-brief-taxation-sugar-sweetened-beverages-barbados>. See, also: Alvarado, et al., 'Trends in Beverage Prices Following the Introduction of a Tax on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages in Barbados', *Preventive Medicine*, vol. 105, 2017, pp. S23–S25, available at <www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743517302608>.
36. Caro, Juan Carlos, et al., 'Chile's 2014 Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax and Changes in Prices and Purchases of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages: An observational study in an urban environment', *PLOS Medicine*, vol. 15, no. 7, 3 July 2018, p. e1002597, available at <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002597>.
37. Felongco, Gilbert P., 'WHO Hails Philippine Move to Raise Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages', Gulf News Asia, 9 January 2018, <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/philippines/who-hails-philippine-move-to-raise-taxes-on-sugar-sweetened-beverages-1.2154189>.

38. Hong, Tan Heng, 'Sales Volume of Beverages in the Philippines Fell Following Sugar Tax', Mini Me Insights, 17 June 2018, <www.minimeinsights.com/2018/06/17/sales-volume-of-beverages-in-the-philippines-fell-following-sugar-tax>.
39. WHO South Africa, 'WHO Commends South African Parliament Decision to Pass Tax Bill on Sugary Drinks', WHO Regional Office for Africa, 6 December 2017, <www.afro.who.int/news/who-commends-south-african-parliament-decision-pass-tax-bill-sugary-drinks>.
40. Arthur, Rachel, 'South Africa Introduces Sugar Tax', Beverage Daily.com, 3 April 2018, <www.beveragedaily.com/Article/2018/04/03/South-Africa-introduces-sugar-tax>.
41. Drinks Insight Network, 'UK Implements Soft Drinks Industry Levy', Verdict Media Limited, 6 April 2018, <www.drinks-insight-network.com/news/uk-implements-soft-drinks-industry-levy>.
42. Hu, Frank B., 'Resolved: There is sufficient scientific evidence that decreasing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption will reduce the prevalence of obesity and obesity-related diseases', *Obesity Reviews*, vol. 14, no. 8, August 2013, pp. 606–619, available at <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23966427>.
43. Williams, Joseph P., 'How to Sell a Soda Tax', U.S. News and World Report, 9 April 2018, <www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2018-04-09/chicago-berkeley-offer-contrasting-soda-tax-templates>.
44. 'Sweet Success: Will sugar taxes improve health?' (Editorial), *Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*, vol. 5, no. 4, April 2017, p. 235, open PDF from <www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2213-8587%2817%2930070-0>.
45. Kaplan, Jennifer, 'Soda Wars Rage On in Philly, Where Tax Is Blamed for Job Losses', Bloomberg Business, 9 January 2018, <www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-09/soda-wars-rage-on-in-philly-where-tax-is-blamed-for-job-losses>.
46. Karp, Paul, 'Most Australians Want Sugar Tax on Drinks: Guardian Essential poll', *Guardian*, 15 January 2018, <www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jan/16/most-australians-want-sugar-tax-on-drinks-guardian-essential-poll>.
47. Alberici, Emma, 'Sugar Tax and the Power of Big Business: How influence trumps evidence in politics', ABC News, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 24 January 2018, <www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-24/sugar-tax-and-the-power-of-big-business/9353626>.
48. Jacobs, Andrew, and Matt Richtel, 'She Took on Colombia's Soda Industry. Then She Was Silenced', *New York Times*, 13 November 2017, <www.nytimes.com/2017/11/13/health/colombia-soda-tax-obesity.html>.
49. Scott-Thomas, Caroline, 'Denmark to Scrap Decades-Old Soft Drink Tax', Food Navigator.com, 25 April 2013, <www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2013/04/25/Denmark-to-scrap-decades-old-soft-drink-tax>; and European Public Health Alliance, 'Denmark's Fat Duty: Latest victim of food politics', EPHA, 14 November 2012, <https://epha.org/epha-press-release-denmarks-fat-duty-latest-victim-of-food-politics>.
50. European Public Health Alliance, 'Denmark's Fat Duty: Latest victim of food politics', EPHA, 14 November 2012, <https://epha.org/epha-press-release-denmarks-fat-duty-latest-victim-of-food-politics>; and Holm, Lotte, Jørgen Dejgaard Jensen and Signild Vallgårda, 'The Rise and Fall of the Danish Fat Tax', Department of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen, 2013, open PDF from <www.acss.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/5-AcSS-IAG-Seminar-3-Holm.pdf>.
51. European Supermarket Magazine, 'Slovenian Government Gives Up on Sugary Drinks Tax', 17 December 2014, <www.esmmagazine.com/slovenian-government-gives-up-on-sugary-drinks-tax/7884>; and Slovenia Times, 'Will New Tax on Sugary Drinks Boost Alcohol Consumption?', 18 February 2013, <www.sloveniatimes.com/will-new-tax-on-sugary-drinks-will-boost-alcohol-consumption>.
52. Independent Expert Group of the Global Nutrition Report, *2018 Global Nutrition Report: Shining a light to spur action on nutrition*, Development Initiatives Poverty Research Ltd., Bristol, UK, 2018, p. 16, available at <https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/global-nutrition-report-2018>.
53. World Health Organization, *Global Nutrition Policy Review 2016–2017*, WHO, Geneva, 2018, pp. VII, available at <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina>.
54. World Health Organization, *Global Nutrition Policy Review 2016–2017*, WHO, Geneva, 2018, pp. X–XI, 22, available at <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina>.
55. For an introduction to the elements of change that could be necessary in a systemic response, see: Swinburn, Boyd A., et al., 'The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change: The Lancet Commission report – Policy Brief', Lancet, January 2019, open PDF from <https://marlin-prod.literatumonline.com/pb-assets/Lancet/stories/commissions/obesity-2019/GlobalSyndemicCommission_policybrief.pdf>. The full report, videos and other related content are available at <www.thelancet.com/commissions/global-syndemic>.
56. Content for the case study tables was developed in 2018; all currency conversions were carried out on 9 February 2018, using the rates at www.xe.com. These tables are presented as a tool for comparing policies in the four countries and should not be interpreted as a conclusive description of any tax law's past or current status.

Acknowledgements and copyright

Through a partnership with UNICEF to provide pro bono assistance, global law firm DLA Piper conducted the original research in 2018 and wrote a draft presentation on 'sugar taxes', including case studies, tables and a summary of country experiences.

Editing and additional research and writing were provided by Catherine Rutgers.

This project was managed by Bernadette Gutmann, UNICEF Child Rights and Business. The publication benefited from many vital inputs from UNICEF Nutrition, with special thanks to colleagues France Begin, Maaike Arts, David Clark and Roland Kupka.

Suggested citation: United Nations Children's Fund, 'Implementing Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages: An overview of current approaches and the potential benefits for children', UNICEF, Geneva, March 2019.

Contact:
UNICEF Child Rights & Business
Avenue de la Paix 5-7
1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Cover photo credit: © UNICEF/160818_5961/Juárez


unicef
for every child