



INDICATORS SYSTEM FOR THE EVALUATION OF MEXICO'S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF OVERWEIGHT, OBESITY AND DIABETES (ENPCSOD)

I. AIM

This document is a brief description of the process carried out for the establishment of this public - private alliance for the construction of the indicators system developed by the Aspen Institute México (AIM) and the *Instituto Mexicano de la Competitividad* (Mexican Institute for Competitiveness, IMCO), jointly with the Secretaría de Salud Pública (Mexico's Ministry of Health).

In March 2014, AIM and IMCO resolved to collaborate with the Mexico's Ministry of Health toward the achievement of the objectives of Mexico's National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Overweight, Obesity, and Diabetes, through the construction of a national indicators system developed by these two civil society organizations and financed by the private sector in a transparent process which involves the different players of society who are interested in solving the health problems associated with overweight, obesity and diabetes.

The indicators system presented through the *Observatorio Mexicano de Enfermedades no Transmisibles* (Mexican Observatory of Noncommunicable Diseases, OMENT) is an unprecedented exercise as it systematizes variables around the factors which have a bearing on the prevention, management, and reduction of overweight, obesity and diabetes.

However, we must acknowledge the fact that the exercise has some important limitations on account of the lack and unavailability of information. In other words, the 2015 indicators system should be regarded as a starting point for the measures that Mexico should adopt in order to strengthen follow-up and the measuring carried out in terms of the challenge posed by the population's overweight and obesity.

II. ASPEN, IMCO AND ALLIES

The **Aspen Institute México** (AIM) began operations in Mexico in March, 2013. AIM is a civil society organization that develops activities related to education, public policies and leadership through the promotion of open, pluralistic, non-partisan dialogs on issues and topics which are relevant to society. It is chaired by Doctor Juan Ramón de la Fuente, former president of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (National Autonomous University of Mexico) and it includes among its members renowned Mexican academics, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

AIM's ideals, values, and leadership lie at the core of its activities. This Institute is part of a global network led by the Aspen Institute (US). After more than six decades of its



foundation, the Aspen Institute is now present in ten countries and it has become a benchmark at debate and leadership forums.

AIM's activities comprise seminars, culture and science dissemination activities, forums for the analysis of public policies, the publication of sectoral studies, leadership initiatives, and academic and formative programs.

The specific objectives of the Aspen Institute Mexico are:

- To propose alternative solutions to the main problems affecting Mexico from a national, regional, and international perspective. These solutions should result from study, analysis, reflection and debate, involving the participation of outstanding leaders from different (academic, corporate, political, etc.) sectors.
- To encourage leadership among Mexican youth through the values and principles of liberal democracies, and provide them with national and international tools and networks of contacts that allow them to contribute to the development of their communities and their society, from their sphere of activity.
- To foster the participation of different players of Mexican society through executive seminars, public policy programs, culture and science dissemination activities, leadership activities, and other specialized events that promote a more open society and better economic development.
- To broaden the organization's national and international relationships (primarily, although not exclusively, with the Aspen Institute's international network) in order to develop links between leaders as well as to promote democratic values and principles such as liberty, the rule of law, and the participation of civil society, among others.

In its pursuit to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the AIM focuses on these issues: democracy, economic development, the rule of law, education and technology, gender equality, health and social security, youth and entrepreneurship, the environment and sustainability, tourism, corporate social responsibility, ethics, citizen participation, and science and culture.

The Instituto Mexicano de la Competitividad (*Mexican Institute for Competitiveness, IMCO*), chaired by Dr. Juan Pardinas, is a center for evidence-based applied research. IMCO's institutional mission is to act as a consultant to the Mexican society with regard to



public policies. It is a non-profit, non-partisan independent institution dedicated to developing feasible proposals to enhance Mexico's capacity to attract and retain talent and investments.

IMCO was founded in 2004 and since then its work has focused on generating public policy analyses and proposals with the purpose of promoting informed debate on the country's development. The institute is formed by researchers and consultants who are experts in various issues of public concern.

Through analysis documents and the development and dissemination of competitiveness indexes (at the global, national, and urban levels), IMCO provides useful information for the design, monitoring and follow-up of national public policies for Mexico's competitiveness and development.

The methodology employed by IMCO is fully open and transparent. The different indexes are produced on an alternate biannual basis and the information generated is public domain.

As part of the effort to generate and disseminate relevant information about issues on the national agenda, IMCO also develops technology-based platforms and initiatives.

Six private-sector companies financed the work that was developed during this process (from March of 2014 to July of 2015). These companies are: **Seguros AXA, Bimbo, Danone, PepsiCo, Sanofi, and the US Soybean Export Council.**

III. THE MEXICAN CONTEXT

A national epidemic

According to Mexico's Encuesta Nacional de Salud y Nutrición 2012 (2012 National Survey on Health and Nutrition), approximately seven out of every ten adults in the country suffer from overweight. Additionally, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCDE) ranks Mexico second in the world for prevalence of obesity. As a direct consequence, Type II diabetes mellitus has become a major healthcare problem and Mexico ranks first worldwide in terms of the prevalence of this disease among people aged 20 to 79.

Moreover, the percentage of school children and adolescents who suffered from obesity or overweight in 2012 was 34.4 and 35 respectively, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

In addition, the results published by Ensanut 2012 about physically active and sedentary lifestyles show that 58.6 percent of children and adolescents aged 10 to 14 did not mention performing any physical activities over the twelve months prior to the survey.



Based on this data, the Federal Government designed the National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Obesity and Diabetes (ENPCOD), whose basic principle is to produce a coordinated response from the government, the private sector, and society in general, for the relief of this non-communicable disease.

Government strategy

On the first day of President Peña Nieto's administration, the Mexican government and the main political parties (PRI, PAN, and PRD) announced and signed the Pact for Mexico, which enumerates a series of actions and reforms to be promoted and implemented during the President's term in office. The second agreement on the list concerns the fight against obesity by banning the selling of high calorie food products at schools. This reflected the priority that the current administration has accorded to this problem since then. Eleven months later, on October 31st, 2013, the National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Overweight, Obesity, and Diabetes was announced by President Enrique Peña Nieto and Dr. Mercedes Juan, Mexico's Secretary of Health. The strategy establishes four premises:

1. Health must be taken into consideration in all public policies.
2. The focus must be on the social determinants, under a comprehensive approach that includes interventions that range from the promotion of health to medical care.
3. The sum of the efforts of all sectors and players is a priority.
4. Measuring the impact of omitted actions and accountability for them are fundamental elements for the correct operation of this strategy.

The purpose of the strategy is to improve the welfare of Mexico's population and contribute to national sustainable development by reducing obesity and overweight in order to reverse the epidemic of non-communicable diseases that result from them, especially Type II diabetes mellitus, through public health policies, a comprehensive health model, and horizontal actions.

The first pillar of the strategy is Public Health. The strategy aims to preserve the health of the population by promoting a healthy life style through educational campaigns and also by monitoring the trends of the epidemics of non-communicable diseases (NCD) and some of their main determinants, along with preventive actions such as an active search for the vulnerable population.

The second pillar of the strategy is Medical Care. Regarding this pillar, the strategy seeks to guarantee effective access to healthcare services through medical interventions aimed at people with risk factors and those who have been diagnosed with hypoglycemia or type II diabetes mellitus, providing them with constant care and preventing complications associated with their disease.



The strategy states the need to establish the necessary requirements and services for the appropriate performance of healthcare services associated with these diseases as well as the use of available technologies that enable and enhance access to the services provided at healthcare units. It also proposes actions for the training of healthcare personnel in related diseases, the promotion of research, and the generation of scientific evidence.

Finally, the third pillar concerns the Regulations on Health and Fiscal Policy. The strategy aims to establish effective responses through labeling and the regulation of advertising, in particular advertising targeted at children, and also through fiscal policies intended to reduce the consumption of high calorie food products with little nutritional value for students.

As part of this measure, special taxes (IEPS) were levied on beverages with high sugar content (1 peso per liter) and high calorie content food products (an 8 percent tax on the product's price), effective as of January 1st, 2014.

As you can see, the ENPCSOD promotes a culture of healthy habits that preserves the health of the population, the early detection of obesity and diabetes cases in order to guarantee their appropriate control and management, a platform with well-trained human resources, and the necessary requirements to have an efficient health system.

The government's vision for the medium term is for the strategy to stem the growth of obesity and overweight so that the prevalence of both diseases is reduced, and have a positive impact by diminishing the risk of premature death due to diabetes.

The main principles of the strategy are: research and scientific evidence, shared responsibility, continued actions, contact with the different sectors, as well as the measurement and evaluation of the actions. These factors will help to give greater depth to the efforts made.

This strategy does not only cover the essential aspects of prevention and medical care, but it also generates changes in lifestyles, such as the promotion of a healthy diet and the reduction of physical inactivity through actions in different settings and environments like the family, education, workplaces, and the community.

Finally, the actions to be taken must be comprehensive and thorough. Therefore, it is necessary to promote their permanent evaluation in order to improve them and identify and solve issues with their planning and implementation, and create accountability mechanisms and mechanisms for the evaluation of results.

The Strategy faces important challenges that could be met through the authorities and society. In order to undertake these actions, the Strategy includes a mechanism for the participation of civil society, academy, the industrial sector, and six civil society organizations.



The first of such organizations is the Observatory, which was created in 2014 and is based in the *Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León* (Autonomous University of Nuevo León) as an independent entity. Its objective is to monitor the actions undertaken within the context of the Strategy. The second organization is the *Comité Técnico Asesor* (Advisory Technical Committee) which is a pluralistic entity that represent the different sectors of society and whose mission is to support the tasks of the Observatory.

IV. A PUBLIC - PRIVATE ALLIANCE

With a comprehensive health strategy and within the context of the intense debate on the overweight and obesity epidemic, the AIM and IMCO proposed to the Secretariat of Health to join efforts to design an indicators system to measure the impact of specific actions of the Strategy. The indicators system would be sponsored by a select group of private companies.

The steps to create the indicators system have been the following:

1. Construction of a coalition

A coalition of parties interested in systematizing follow-up on and the impact of public policies on overweight and obesity:

- *Think tanks:* The Aspen Institute México and the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness
- *Private sector companies:* AXA, Bimbo, Danone, PepsiCo, Sanofi, and the USSEC
- *Civil society organizations:* *ContraPeso*, *Midete*, and *Queremos Mexicanos Activos*

2. Presentation of the first methodology and analysis proposal for the construction of an indicators system for the Secretariat of Health

AIM and IMCO agreed with Dr Pablo Kuri, Under Secretary of Health Prevention and Promotion, to work on the development of an indicators system to measure the impact of the strategy. These work meetings with the Secretariat of Health were held between April and June of 2014. Once the areas to be developed had been agreed upon, Under Secretary Kury had a meeting with some private sector firms and health NGOs with the purpose of drawing up a work plan that would define the methodology, the variables, and the information sources to be included in the indicators system.

3. Technical meetings with experts for the construction of the indicators system

The meetings with experts from different institutions to construct the indicators system were coordinated by the Secretariat of Health, AIM, and IMCO. The following institutions participated in all the work done: Cofepris, IMSS, ISSSTE, SHCP, STPS, *Instituto Nacional de Salud y Nutrición* (National Institute for Health and Nutrition), and INEGI.

Subsequently, the indicators system was presented at the Advisory Council of the Mexican Observatory for Non-Communicable Diseases for its 7 members to make



observations and comments on the methodology and variables. In particular, some very specific recommendations were received from the *Fundación Carso para la Salud* (Carso Foundation for Health), ConMéxic, and Canacintra. All of these associations and institutions provided support and follow-up to AIM and IMCO during this process.

4. Experts' workshop and final adjustments

Once the system had been designed and constructed, the Secretariat of Health hosted an experts' workshop. Federal and state agencies, as well as representatives from a wide group of academic institutions and civil society organizations participated in the workshop for the purpose of strengthening and enhancing the indicators system. Roundtables and working groups were organized around the three pillars of the National Strategy (Public Health, Medical Care, Regulations on Health and Fiscal Policy) and the methodology for the indicators system.

Workshop results were positive. The debate bore fruit with the final version of the system presented by AIM and IMCO, which was enhanced in key topics and issues, based on the analysis.

5. Submission to OMENT

The final version of the indicators system was submitted to the *Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León* (Autonomous University of Nuevo León), venue of the Mexican Observatory for Non-Communicable Diseases (OMENT), for the dissemination of the results it yields, which should become a tool for the systematic, objective analysis of the variables that have a bearing on the health problems associated with overweight, obesity, and diabetes.

V. CONCLUSION

Summing up, AIM and IMCO collaborated with the Secretariat of Health in the construction of an innovative indicators system that will allow us to evaluate and compare a large number of players and factors involved in the prevention and control of obesity-related diseases. This system will facilitate understanding and complex decision-making to multiple players:

- The federal, state, and municipal governments
- Experts and researchers
- The private sector
- The organized civil society
- Society in general

Additionally, the system will consolidate relevant information for decision making in a single instrument.

By the same token, we consider that the system will be a key tool to reflect on how to succeed in using the resources generated by the IEPS to contribute to develop:



- Better sources of information
- Health prevention and promotion programs
- Specific technical studies

Nonetheless, it is also important to acknowledge the fact that this first edition of the indicators system is a first approach to the systematization of variables from different environments and sources to gain a better understanding of a complex multifactorial public health problem.

This first version of the indicators system has some inherent limitations mostly due to the information and sources that were available for its construction. In a few years and with the joint commitment of the Health Secretariat and the entities which are part of the Strategy (SEP, SEDATU, SHCP, and STPS, among others) the variables will be refined and strengthened in order to turn this indicators system into a more powerful, more efficient tool to fulfill its objective to evaluate and follow-up on the public policies in place, for the benefit of Mexico.