

# Technical report: Conclusions and future work

The Optimising Evidence project aimed to understand how evidence on what works to shift people towards healthy sustainable diets can be better translated for, and adopted by, food policymakers and practitioners, including retailers and other on-the-ground actors.

The research team conducted both a scoping and rapid evidence review of available evidence use literature and identified 15 different barriers to evidence use and nine enablers for evidence use. The conceptual framework, developed through the scoping review, helped to define the project scope and boundaries while also informing the primary qualitative research, consisting of elite interviews, retailer discussions, workshops, participant interviews and feedback sessions with a total of 30 participants from across the English food system. Participants included representatives from major retailers; third sector, community and nongovernmental organisations; food banks; international and national food campaign and policy organisations; local and national authorities; a regional public health network; local food hubs; and trade associations. The results of this study provide, for the first time to the authors' knowledge, insight into the current practice, needs and preferences of food retailers and on-the-ground food actors, including both public and private sectors. The outputs of the project include this technical report, a rapid evidence review and the Guiding Principles, published separately and outlining eight different enablers for optimising evidence for diet shift policy and practice. There are opportunities for future research on this topic, including (but not limited to): exploring how effective the Guiding Principles are for optimising evidence use and exploring the impact of increased evidence use on transformational diet shift within the UK. There is also a need to explore innovative institutional structures to facilitate more collaboration and deliberation across and between different sectors, departments and disciplines, as well as explore existing best practices for doing so. Finally, retail and SME participants discussed opportunities to raise awareness and competence for food industry actors around interdisciplinary food systems thinking.