

# Guide to understanding the Healthy Venue Award criteria

## Bronze Award



# Overview



In order to be approved for the Healthy Venues Bronze Award, you will need to:

- Meet all of the criteria outlined in this document
- Commit to the general principles of the Award scheme, including:
  - Promoting all of your work as a Healthy Venue Champion to event planners
  - Committing to a healthy ethos, striving to go above and beyond the requirements specified in the criteria and continually seek to improve your activities
  - Actively seeking to evaluate your actions using customer feedback forms and sales data and providing annual or bi-annual updates
- You will have been provided with a selection of documents to help you through the process. Please read each of these carefully.
  - The information pack contains background and summary information to the award scheme
  - The toolkit provides information which will help with the implementation of the criteria. It covers all areas of the award but is of most relevance to the catering team as it provides the definitions and guidelines for healthier menus
  - The criteria overview summarises the criteria on one page
  - The criteria guidance (this document) takes you through each individual criteria point and provide further details about the specific criteria – why it is included, what we expect from you, some tips on achieving it and the evidence required
- When you are ready to apply, please send the required documents (the application form and the assessment form) to Hannah Brinsden [hbrinsden@worldobesity.org](mailto:hbrinsden@worldobesity.org)

# Definitions



- Event planner – your client
- Delegate – event attendees
- “we” - World Obesity Federation
- “you” – venue manager
- A ‘Set menu’ refers to any menu selection where choice is minimal or not offered
- A ‘menu’ refers to a wider selection of items available for event planners to choose from, ‘a la carte’ style
- Unless otherwise stated these criteria refer to catering options available to event planners rather than onsite cafes and restaurants
- Where catering is controlled externally, evidence must be provided that steps have been taken to conform to these criteria as much as possible and that efforts have been taken to confirm and to shift product availability accordingly

# 1. Establishing catering guidelines



# A1.1 Establish catering practices that support National Dietary Guidelines



## Rationale

Many countries around the world have developed national food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG) which make recommendations about what a healthy diet looks like. These provide a good guide to the foods that should be included and promoted on catering menus.

## What we expect

A commitment that catering provided at your venue follows the underlying principles presented in your national food-based dietary guidelines.

## Guidance

- National FBDG can be found here <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/nutrition-education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/>
- Typically the guidelines include recommendations for each of the main food groups – fruit & vegetables, dairy, meat & pulses, carbohydrates and foods high in fat, sugar and/or salt – including the proportion that should be consumed, and 'healthier' options within each category. Some guidelines also provide advice on 'healthier' cooking methods
- See the toolkit for tips on 'healthier' cooking ingredients and food options. As a general rule you should avoid ready prepared foods and ingredients such as sauces, stocks, sandwich fillers, dressings where possible

## Evidence required

- A statement stating which dietary guidelines you are using and how you have incorporated them into your catering practices

## 2. Cooking, preparation and recipe formulation



# A2.1 Adopt cooking practices that reduce the amount of salt in food



## Rationale

Salt increases blood pressure, a known risk factor for stroke, heart attacks and other health conditions. Most people around the world consume too much salt. People's taste buds easily adapt to lower salt foods. In many countries around the world food available in supermarkets now contains less salt than it did 5-10 years ago. Salt is primarily used in food for flavour rather than as a functional ingredient and can therefore be substituted or reduced relatively easily.

## What we expect

The adoption of cooking practices which reduce the amount of salt in the food offered on your menus.

## Guidance

- Refer to the toolkit for examples of 'healthier' food options and recommended cut offs for salt content per 100g. As general practice you should
  - Use low-salt stock cubes or make your own stock
  - Avoid adding salt in cooking, instead use herbs and spices for flavour
  - Avoid adding salt when cooking starchy carbohydrates such as pasta, rice and potatoes
  - If using tinned vegetables, use ones with no added salt
  - Limit the use of salty ingredients such as soy sauce, fish sauce, olives, anchovies in your cooking
  - Limit or avoid the use of pre-prepared products such as sauces, stocks and sandwich fillings and dressings

## Evidence required

- A written statement on the measures taken to reduce salt in food
- Example nutritional content of menu items (if possible)
- A target for how much less salt to be used (based on salt added to cooking) over the next 6months/year (if you weren't previously taking actions in this area)

# A2.2 Adopt cooking practices that reduce the amount of added sugar in food



## Rationale

Foods high in added sugar can contribute to excess calorie intake which in turn can lead to weight gain and can also contribute to tooth decay and other health conditions. Guidelines suggest people should halve the amount of added sugar they consume.

## What we expect

The adoption of cooking practices which reduce the amount of saturated fat in the food provided on your menus.

## Guidance

- Refer to toolkit for examples of 'healthier' food options and recommended cut offs for sugar content
- Common sources of added sugar during cooking include table sugar, dressings, honey and syrups
- As general practice you should
  - Avoid adding sugar, honey or syrup to savoury dishes, sauces, or fruit
  - If using tinned fruit, choose options with no added sugar and avoid those with syrup
  - Avoid using prepared sauces, dressings, condiments, but if you do choose lower sugar options
  - Reduce the amount of sugar used in cakes, biscuits and desserts. Instead use alternative flavours such as cinnamon, vanilla and fresh fruit
  - Use low/no sugar versions of flavoured dairy, such as yogurt
  - Limit the use of chocolate in cooking, or use dark versions

## Evidence required

- A written statement on the measures taken to reduce sugar in food
- Example nutritional content of menu items (if possible)
- A target for how much less sugar to be used in the coming month (based on sugar added to cooking)

## A2.3 Adopt cooking practices that reduce the amount of saturated fat in food



### Rationale

Saturated fats can increase the risk of heart disease while unsaturated fats can help lower cholesterol, a risk factor for heart disease.

### What we expect

The adoption of cooking practices that reduce the saturated fat content of food provided on your menus.

### Guidance

- Refer to toolkit for examples of 'healthier' food options and recommended cut offs for saturated fat content
- As general practice you should
  - Use lower fat versions of dairy products
  - Use vegetable oils for cooking
  - Reduce the amount of cheese used in cooking or use lower fat versions such as cream cheese, ricotta, cottage cheese
  - Limit the amount of cream used in cooking and use lower fat alternatives such as crème fraiche and yogurt
  - Remove fat from meat before cooking and increase the amount of fish and lean meats used

### Evidence required

- A written statement on the measures taken to reduce saturated fat in food
- Example nutritional content of menu items (if possible)
- A target of shift in oil (if you weren't previously using a 'healthier' oil)

## A2.4 Ensure that at least half of all bread served is wholemeal/wholegrain



### Rationale

Wholemeal/wholegrain foods are high in fibre which is recommended as part of a healthy diet. White bread contains a lot less fibre than wholemeal/wholegrain equivalents.

### What we expect

Whenever bread is served, either in bread baskets or for sandwiches, at least half should be in the wholemeal/wholegrain form.

### Guidance

- Bread products refers to any rolls, bread, bagels, wraps and other similar products
- At least half of the items provided should be wholemeal, rye, seeded or granary

### Evidence required

- Product label and/or recipe and/or confirmation of flour type used
- photographs of sandwich platter/bread baskets
- A target for how much more wholemeal/wholegrain bread products are purchased/made as a result of meeting this criteria (if you weren't previously meeting it)

# 3. Providing 'healthier' choices and default options



# A3.1 Ensure that at least 25% of menu items on offer are 'healthier'



## Rationale

While the ultimate decision on the food that is served to delegates lies with the event planner, you can increase the availability of healthy options to increase the likelihood that the menus served are healthy and contribute to a healthy balanced diet.

## What we expect

At least a quarter of items available on each menu, either a la carte or in set menus, should be 'healthier' options.

## Guidance

- Refer to the toolkit for the requirements for 'healthier' options, examples of 'healthier' food and recommended cut offs for salt, sugar and fat content per 100g of food
- As a general guide, a healthy menu item could be promoted in your national food-based dietary guideline and is lower in saturated fat, added sugar and salt and may also have a high content of fruit, vegetables, fibre and/or wholegrain
- Gluten-free, wheat-free, dairy-free, meat-free items are only 'healthier' options when they are also low in saturated fat, added sugar and salt

## Evidence required

- A copy of the menus, indicating which products meet the "healthier" criteria
- A written statement on some of the steps taken to achieve this target
- A written statement on any measures taken to specifically promote these 'healthier' food options to event planners
- Example nutritional content of menu items (if possible)

## A3.2 Always offer a choice of low-sugar or no-sugar drinks where drinks are served



### Rationale

Drinks can be a hidden source of calories and sugar in people's diets. Making sure that there are always low-sugar options available will help people to control their calorie intake and therefore maintain a healthy weight.

### What we expect

Wherever drinks are on offer low- or no-sugar options should always be made available.

### Guidance

- Refer to toolkit for examples of 'healthier' drink ideas
- Low-sugar drinks include water/sparkling water, diet soft drinks and herbal teas

### Evidence required

- A copy of the menus, indicating what low- and no-sugar options you offer
- photographs of a drink stand showing the range of drinks on offer
- If this is a new practice, an estimate of how sales of certain drink products have shifted or are projected to shift

## A3.3 Provide free drinking water on site



### Rationale

Staying hydrated is important for health. Water is the healthiest way to stay hydrated, however plastic water bottles are a significant contributor to waste.

### What we expect

Drinking water should be made accessible and free of charge to all visitors at your venue.

### Guidance

- Free drinking water should be easily accessible and at multiple places around the venue free of charge. Suggestions include
  - Having jugs of tap water available at all coffee and meal breaks
  - Providing drinking fountains around the venue
  - Having drinking water taps around the venue or in rest rooms
  - Providing water coolers around the venue

### Evidence required

- photographs /statement of where free water is available
- A copy of a event planner information indicating where water is free of charge

## A3.4 Make salt cellars or sachets available by request only as 'standard' practice



### Rationale

Consuming salt is known to increase blood pressure which in turn contributes to heart disease and other health conditions. Most people consume too much salt. Salt is often added to food out of habit. Making salt less easily available can help to “nudge” people towards consuming less salt.

### What we expect

Salt cellars or sachets should not to be visibly available when food is served.

### Guidance

- Salt should not be visibly available where food is served
- Salt should be kept nearby and provided when requested by delegates
- Consider providing shakers with chilli, herbs, pepper and/or low-salt as alternatives
- If you wish you can offer this as an opt-out service to event planners and/or have a sign indicating that salt has deliberately not been put out

### Evidence required

- Estimated reduction in salt used by delegates

## A3.5 Always provide a low sugar / low fat option when dairy is served



### Rationale

Dairy is an important part of a healthy diet but can contain high amounts of saturated fat. Some products such as yogurt and flavoured milk can also contain high levels of added sugar. Offering lower fat and low-sugar options can help people to be 'healthier' while still consuming dairy.

### What we expect

When dairy items are provided to visitors, lower fat and sugar versions should always be made easily available.

### Guidance

- Refer to toolkit for examples of dairy swaps and things to watch out for
- As a general principle
  - Offer the choice for delegates to use low-fat/no-fat milk for tea and coffee and clearly label these
  - Provide plain yogurts without added sugar as snack/dessert options
  - Use soft cheese such as cottage cheese, mozzarella and ricotta rather than hard cheese such as cheddar for sandwiches and salads

### Evidence required

- A copy of menu showing that the lower sugar/fat options
- An indication of nutritional content of the yogurts provided (if possible)
- An estimate of how sales/purchases of milk, yogurt and other dairy items have changed as a result of meeting this criteria (if action is new)

# 4. Raising awareness and labelling



# A4.1 Promote healthy eating alongside catering information given to event planners



## Rationale

As a venue you have a unique opportunity to promote healthy eating to event planners when you engage with them. Promoting healthy eating also gives you an opportunity to promote the work you are doing to improve the healthiness of your menus. By working with event planners you can increase the likelihood that the healthy menu items you have are selected by event planners.

## What we expect

You should take steps to promote healthy eating and your healthy menu items to event planners.

## Guidance

- See the toolkit for suggested 'healthy meeting checklist' for event
- As a general principle
  - Promote healthy eating to event planners through your information pack
  - Tell event planners about the healthy venues initiative and what you are doing as part of this
  - Highlight the healthy menu items to event planners
- If you do evaluations of event planner experiences, include at least one evaluation question about the menu making specific reference to the healthy items and another to confirm they were told about the 'healthier' menu items. This information should be fed back to World Obesity for evaluative purposes

## Evidence required

- A copy of the information provided to event planners
- Indication of sales of healthy items as a proportion of total menu choices
- A copy of evaluation showing the question (s) asked related to healthy eating
- A copy of evaluation asking if they were told about healthy eating/ survey answers

# 5. Marketing, promotions and sponsorship



# A5.1 Provide event planners with the option to request removal of certain 'unhealthy' products from catering specifically for their event



## Rationale

Organisations and Associations, particularly those that are health-related, may have strict internal catering rules about what can and cannot be offered at meetings that they organise. Supporting event planners in ensuring they can offer catering which meets the expectations of the organisation and/or delegates is a valuable part of the service you can offer that can help make meetings 'healthier'.

## What we expect

Event planners should be allowed to request that certain "standard" products from your menu are not offered during their meeting.

## Guidance

- This could include a wide variety of menu items, including for instance soft drinks at drink receptions or biscuits at coffee breaks
- Where requested/required 'healthier' alternatives should be offered at no extra charge (e.g. fruit and nuts at coffee breaks and sparkling water at drink receptions)

## Assessment

- Details of how this is offered
- Examples of this in practice

## A5.2 Provide only "standard" size packs of confectionary and snack items *(when sold on site)*



### Rationale

Over time, snacking has become more popular and portion sizes have tended to increase. While it is generally recommended that people should seek 'healthier' options, another way to help reduce consumption of saturated fat, sugar and salt is to consume smaller portions of products high in these nutrients. Promoting smaller packets of snack foods such as chocolate bars, sweets and crisps is a small step that you can make as a venue to support 'healthier' eating and help to shift perceptions on 'normal' serving sizes.

### What we expect

Confectionary and snack items available on site should be available in small or 'standard' size packs rather than large or share size packs.

### Guidance

- This criteria refers to any catering outlet or shop which is controlled by your venue or your catering team
- 'standard' size confectionary items are typically 10-35g
- Larger items are often branded as 'grab bags', 'king size', 'for sharing'
- Smaller items are often branded as 'bite-size', 'mini'
- Confectionary items include sweets, crisps, chocolate bars and similar items.

### Evidence required

- photograph of café/restaurant displays
- A statement that this is being met, including details of any changes that have been made.
- Details of the portion sizes on offer

# 6. Vending



# A6.1 Work with vending machine providers to ensure that at least 25% of products are 'healthier'



## Rationale

Vending machines typically contain a range of snacks and drinks which are high in fat, sugar and salt and not recommended in food-based dietary guidelines. By offering more 'healthier' items in these machines you can help to shift people's behaviour towards healthy choices.

## What we expect

We understand that the content of vending machines is often not in your direct control. However, providers of vending machines often have a range of products available for vending and typically can provide 'healthier' alternatives to the 'standard' products. By working with vending machine providers we hope that you could include a greater proportion of 'healthier' options in the vending machines you have onsite.

## Guidance

- Refer to toolkit for examples of 'healthier' vending ideas
- You might consider changing to a vending machine provider which specialises in 'healthier' vending

## Evidence required

- photographs of vending machine with 'healthier' options
- An indication of the proportion of vending machine items which can be considered 'healthier'
- A written statement of how you have engaged with the vending machine company on this issue

# 7. Active Travel



# A7.1 Promote active travel to and from your venue



## Rationale

Active travel is a good way to reduce sedentary behaviour and incorporate physical activity into your daily schedule. Using public transport can increase your activity, but walking or cycling does so even more. By encouraging event planners to promote active travel to and from your venue you can help promote activity, reduce car usage and congestion around your city and also provide people with an opportunity to see the sites of your city

## What we expect

Promote active travel (particularly walking and cycling) to and from your venue with route maps for delegates showing key points of interest in the local vicinity to your venue, routes to hotels in vicinity and to different public transport options

## Guidance

- You can either develop your own maps or work with the local convention bureau, tourist organisation or local community groups
- Information can be provided in a range of ways
  - Direct to delegates via information at the Venue information desk
  - To delegates via the event planner for inclusion in delegate packs
  - Via the conference website , app, program (as appropriate)

## Evidence required

- A copy of the maps
- Details of how this is communicated to event planners

# 8. Reducing sedentary behaviour



# A8.1 Provide clear walking directions within the venue



## Rationale

Making it easy for people to find their way around your venue using the stairs rather than escalators and lifts is a simple way that you can promote activity amongst your visitors. Breaking up long periods of sitting with periods of meetings has been shown to help maintain health and also to improve concentration.

## What we expect

Provide clear walking directions within the venue for getting between the different rooms and exhibition spaces without the need for lifts or escalators.

## Guidance

Walking directions should be clearly signposted around the venue, particularly between rooms, exhibition spaces and catering areas. Signs could be plaques, 'bus stop' signs or on screens around the venue.

## Evidence required

- photographs of signage or maps directing people around the venue

## A8.2 Offer facilities conducive for standing conferences and meetings



### Rationale

Prolonged periods of sitting have been shown to contribute to a person's risk of poor health. By providing the facilities for standing meetings you can help conference delegates to reduce their time spent sitting and increase their activity.

### What we expect

Provide the facilities for standing conferences, or standing areas in conference and meeting rooms.

### Guidance

Facilities for standing conferences include:

- Areas at the back of meeting rooms and lecture rooms without seats / with removable seats
- Signs, such as 'bus stop' signs for standing sections (particularly where seating cannot be removed, for instance in lecture theatres)

### Evidence required

- photographs of standing area implemented (if applicable); details how information about this facility is communicated to event planners

## A8.3: Offer facilities for walking receptions



### Rationale

Prolonged periods of sitting have been shown to contribute to a person's risk of poor health. By providing the facilities for walking receptions you can not only promote less sedentary behaviour at conferences but also help make receptions more interactive for conference delegates.

### What we expect

Provide the facilities for walking receptions and promote these to event planners.

### Guidance

Facilities for walking conferences include:

- High tables for networking
- Catering options suitable for walking receptions, such as canapes (rather than food requiring cutlery)

### Evidence required

- photographs of standing reception set up (if applicable); a copy of menus that are suitable for standing reception; evidence of how this facility is offered to event planners

## A8.4: Make space available for organisers to hold fitness and relaxation sessions



### Rationale

Long conference days and lack of fitness facilities at hotels can often make it difficult for delegates to get the activity time that they want or need. Providing some space at your venue for event planners to use for fitness or relaxation sessions, such as yoga, can make it easier for event planners to incorporate some fitness into their programmes and in turn help delegates to be healthy while away from home.

### What we expect

Space should be available to event planners for fitness and relaxation sessions as part of their programme.

### Guidance

- The space on offer does not need to be exclusive for fitness sessions. Simply offering and promoting the option for a meeting room to be hired cleared of chairs and tables is sufficient.
- Having fitness mats available for these is not essential but may help to promote this facility to event planners

### Evidence required

- A statement of how implemented; example of how promoted; photograph in action

# 9. Promoting physical activity



# A9.1 Promote community recreation facilities



## Rationale

Attending conferences, particularly multi-day conferences, can disrupt people's normal fitness and social routines. Being in an unfamiliar area can also make it harder to locate local gyms, parks, swimming pools and other recreation areas. Providing this information to event planners can help them to promote the facilities to their delegates to help them maintain as much of their normal routine as possible.

## What we expect

Provide information about community recreation facilities, sports parks, swimming pools, gyms and similar to event planners (in the form of a list, with addresses and websites).

## Guidance

You should locate local recreation and fitness facilities in the vicinity of your venue and create a list with website information, address and other useful information. This should then be given to event planners to share with their delegates. This information should also be available at the venue information desk.

## Evidence required

- A copy of the information sheet and details of how it is shared

# 10. Promoting healthier meetings



# A10.1 Promote active meetings to event planners



## Rationale

Conferences typically involve prolonged periods of sitting with little opportunity for activity throughout the day. Studies suggest that breaking up sedentary behaviour with brief spells of activity or stretching can be beneficial to people's health. There are a wide range of small actions that event planners can take to encourage more activity within their programmes. Healthy Venues can help promote these to event planners.

## What we expect

You should promote ideas for healthy meetings to event planners. Where appropriate you should also highlight how you can help support these actions.

## Guidance

- See the toolkit for healthy meeting checklist for event planners
- The simple actions that you can promote include, amongst others, standing applause, hourly stretching breaks, walking receptions, standing space in meeting rooms, morning walks, fun runs, yoga sessions.

## Evidence required

- Evidence of how this is promoted to event planners

# 11. Sponsorship



**There is no criteria related to sponsorship for the Bronze award**



# 12. Employee health & wellness



# A12.1 Implement a written policy to promote physical activity and healthy eating in the workplace



## Rationale

People spend a significant proportion of their time at work, often sat in meetings or at computers, working long hours and towards challenging deadlines. All of this can contribute to poor health and in particular mental health. 'Healthier' eating, regular stretching breaks and physical activity have all been shown to reduce stress and improve concentration.

## What we expect

You should implement a written policy for staff employed and contracted by your venue to promote physical activity and healthy eating in the workplace.

## Guidance

- See the toolkit for examples of workplace health policies, including the World Health Organization guidance
- Workplace health policies may involve, for instance:
  - Promoting flexible breaks to encourage physical activity
  - Health awareness activities, information and events to promote activity and 'healthier' eating
  - Support for staff such as health insurance, discounted gym membership, bike racks, showers

## Evidence required

- A copy of the workplace health policy and any further details on other activities that are implemented

For further information please contact:

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