



## Translating risk-benefit assessment evidence for policy making outcomes of an international workshop

**Monteiro, C De Matteu; Membré, JM; Thomsen, ST; Pires, S Monteiro**

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**Translating risk-benefit assessment evidence for policy making: outcomes of an international workshop**

**Constanza De Matteu Monteiro**

*C De Matteu Monteiro<sup>1</sup>, JM Membre<sup>2</sup>, ST Thomsen<sup>1</sup>, S Monteiro Pires<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Research Group on Risk Benefit, Technical University of Denmark - National Food Institute, Kgs. Lyngby, Denmark

<sup>2</sup>Secalim-Oniris, INRAE, Nantes, France

Contact: cdmmo@food.dtu.dk

**Background:**

Transitioning to sustainable, healthy, and inclusive food systems requires a multi-domain risk analysis approach. Integrated methods, such as health risk-benefit assessment (RBA), can support the formulation of coherent regulations by providing comparative information on potential trade-offs within the areas of food safety and nutrition. Despite extensive scientific developments and applications, RBAs have not yet been fully adopted by regulatory bodies. Hence, participatory science is needed to identify obstacles for implementation and communication of RBAs to optimize and ensure that generated evidence is compatible to regulatory needs.

**Methods:**

As part of the EU funded project HOLiFOOD, an international workshop held in May 2023 brought together food regulators and other stakeholders from across Europe to identify bottlenecks in the use of RBA outputs in decision-making. The meeting included a key-note presentation, surveys, and group discussions.

**Results:**

Thirty-seven participants from 19 institutions based in 13 countries attended the workshop. Obstacles identified were classified into one of the following themes: challenges of using RBAs to inform policymaking, opportunities and needs (e.g., reliability of methods), and communication of RBA outputs. Case studies targeting various foods groups or diets in different contexts is recommended.

**Conclusions:**

Health RBA is a multidisciplinary method useful for prioritizing actions and ensuring transparency in decision-making. Case studies addressing the identified obstacles could increase the reliability of RBA methods and favour the adoption by regulatory bodies. Finally, moving towards holistic approaches may require further cross-departmental collaboration and, potentially, organizational changes of authorities in the future.

**Key messages:**

- Risk-benefit assessment of foods is a robust tool to support public health policymaking.
- Engagement with risk managers and other stakeholders is essential to deliver, and effectively translate, fit-for-purpose scientific evidence.