



# THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT TOOLBOX

Tools to measure natural and built food environments  
in low- and middle-income countries

September 6th, 2024

V1

Community Food Environment Mapping  
Roadside promotion



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## Brief overview

**Overview of Community Food Environment Mapping Tools:** There are three different tools that are included as part of the community food environment mapping tools: 1) food outlet census; 2) **roadside food and beverage promotion**; and 3) mobile vendor census. Depending on your study needs, it may make sense to use all three tools to allow for a comprehensive depiction of the community food environment.

The Community Food Environment Mapping – Roadside Food and Beverage Promotion tool is designed to assess the promotion of food and beverages within the community boundaries (but separate from specific vendors).

## Instructions for the research team

### Defining Community

The ‘community’ food environment can be defined in many ways. The assessment is designed to be used after identifying a community’s boundaries using the Participatory Mapping focus group discussion guide included in the Food Environment Toolbox to inform how the target population defines their community. This can also be used to inform the sampling approach.

This document provides an overview of the assessment for enumerators in paper form. We also include additional instructions for the researcher team to guide the implementation of the assessment as well as a manual of operations for the enumerator in the accompanying Community Food Environment Mapping – Roadside Food and Beverage Promotion Supplemental Instructions file. The tool has been designed to be administered with tablets and mobile devices and we include the programming file for electronic data collection as part of the Toolbox. The programming file formatting may be adapted by researchers to their needs based on which food groups and promotion types they would like to include in the assessment.

The **objective** of this tool is to: assess the type and number of food and beverage promotions that are visible to consumers in their community.

The **findings** from this tool can be used to spatially map food and beverage roadside promotions in a community (outside of vendors themselves) and categorize the types of advertisements by food group.

This assessment is administered by an enumerator and includes: 1) identifying each food and beverage promotion in the community and 2) completing the checklist for each promotion they see. The assessment is informed by the USAID Advancing Nutrition market mapping tool<sup>1</sup> and the Environmental Profile of a Community’s Health (EPOCH)<sup>1</sup> which the promotion module is based on (Chow et al., 2010; USAID AN, 2023).<sup>1,2</sup>

There is one section to this assessment:

- Section 1. Roadside food and beverage promotion in community food environment (not at specific vendors/markets)

**Modifications to assessment:** The observational assessment may be tailored by the research team to elicit specific information relevant to their research question according to the specific context the tool is being used in. The list of food groups may be altered to only include those of interest, such as fresh foods. It is important to note that these changes will alter the scope of the tool.

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<sup>1</sup> USAID Advancing Nutrition. 2023. *Guidelines for Market-Based Food Environment Assessments. Instruction Manual*. Arlington, VA: USAID Advancing Nutrition.

<sup>2</sup> Chow, C.K. et al. 2010. Environmental Profile of a Community’s Health (EPOCH): an instrument to measure environmental determinants of cardiovascular health in five countries. *PLoS one*, 5(12), p.e14294.

## Instructions for enumerator

Complete the assessment for each of the food and beverage promotions visible in the sampling zone. Do not include food and beverage promotions at any vendors that are selling foods and beverages. This will be completed in the food outlet census.

You will likely need to make slight adjustments to the promotion types based on the local context.

### Section 1. Roadside food and beverage promotion in community food environment (not at specific vendors/markets)

This section is designed to obtain very basic information on the types of promotions visible within the sampling zone, where they are, how many there are, and for what foods they are for.

Section 1. Roadside food and beverage promotion in community food environment (not at specific vendors/markets)		
Question	Response options	Tablet programming notes
1. GPS coordinates		Prompt to record GPS one set of coordinates.
2. Please indicate which food group(s) you see promotions for	1. Starchy staples 2. Legumes/pulses 3. Nuts and seeds 4. Unsweetened milk, yogurt, and fresh cheese 5. Eggs 6. Red meat 7. Poultry, game meat, and insects 8. Fish and seafood 9. Processed meat 10. Vitamin A-rich vegetables 11. Dark green leafy vegetables 12. Other vegetables 13. Vitamin A-rich fruits 14. Other fruits 15. Fats and oils 16. Sweets (If selected, ask question 4) 17. Sweet drinks (If selected, ask question 5) 18. Ultra-processed salty snacks (If selected, ask question 6) 19. Ultra-processed ready-to-eat/heat foods 20. Prepared foods by street vendors and restaurants (If selected, ask question 7) 21. Salt, MSG, and salty sauces 22. Simple sugars 23. Fast food 24. Bottled water 25. Alcohol 26. Fortified mixes 27. Spices, tea, coffee, and condiments 28. Other (please specify)	Check all food groups that apply.
3. Select the promotion type observed for [food group]	1. Billboard 2. On bus/car/taxi/tuk-tuk (or other vehicle) 3. On pavement 4. Radio or verbal advertisement 5. On umbrella	Check all that apply.  Ask for every food group chosen.

	6. On cooler, fridge, or other branded materials 7. Posters/pamphlets/leaflets 8. On a wall (including wall paintings like murals) 9. Promotion through attractive display 10. Free food samples 11. Other (please specify)	
4. Select the promotion categories observed for [food group]	1. Price promotion 2. Promotional characters (attracting children) 3. Quantity discounts 4. Game/sweepstakes/prize promotion 5. Combo offers 6. Food delivery app promotion 7. Non-commercial/government promotion of 'healthy' food/beverage/diet 8. Commercial promotion of 'healthy' food/beverage/diet	Check all that apply.  Ask for every food group chosen.
5. Please rate the visibility/audibility of [food group] promotions	1. Not clearly visible (faded or covered), readable, or audible 2. Partially visible and somewhat readable or audible 3. Clearly visible (not faded or covered), readable, or audible 4. A mix of visible/audible and non-visible/audible promotions	Only select one per food group.  Ask for every food group chosen.
6. How many of the [food group] promotions are targeting children?	1. All 2. Nearly all 3. Some 4. None	Only select one per food group.  Ask for every food group chosen.
7. How many [food group] promotions do you see in total from this spot?		Ask for every food group chosen.
8. Attach any relevant photos of any aspects of this assessment that you are unsure of how to classify (optional).		Allow multiple photo uploads.  Allow write-in, text response caption.  Optional