

Tackling marketing of unhealthy foods to children

Dr. Kremlin Wickramasinghe *MBBS MSc DPhil*

a.i. Head, WHO European Office for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD Office) and Adviser (Nutrition)

www.euro.who.int

Effects of marketing of unhealthy foods

- Increased snacking behavior
- Brand loyalty
- Increased risk of overweight/obesity

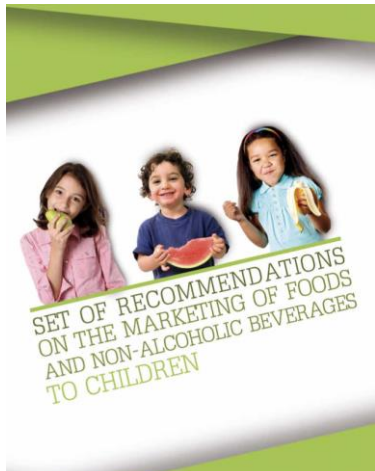


Advertising as a cue to consume: a systematic review and meta-analysis of the effects of acute exposure to unhealthy food and nonalcoholic beverage advertising on intake in children and adults

Authors: Boyland, E. J., Nolan, S., Kelly, B., Tudur-Smith, C., Jones, A., Halford, J. C., & Robinson, E. (2016).

Acute exposure to unhealthy food advertisements
increases food intake in children

WHO Reports related to marketing and advertising



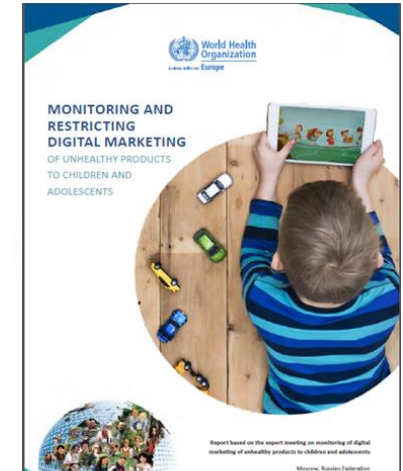
2010



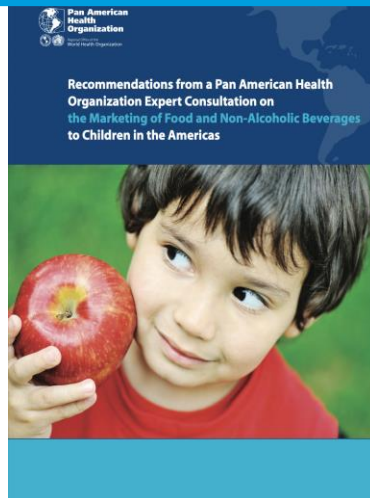
2011



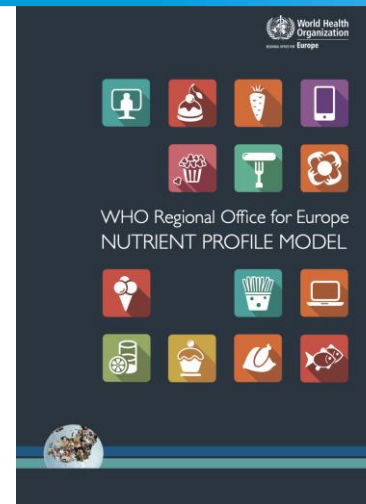
2015



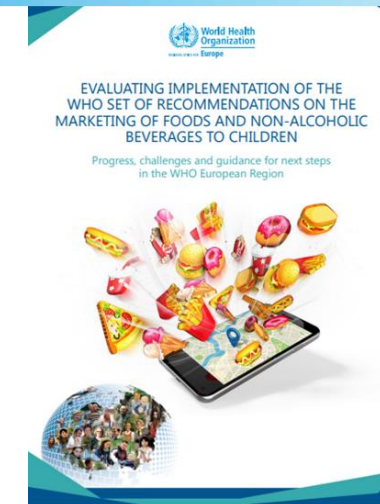
2016



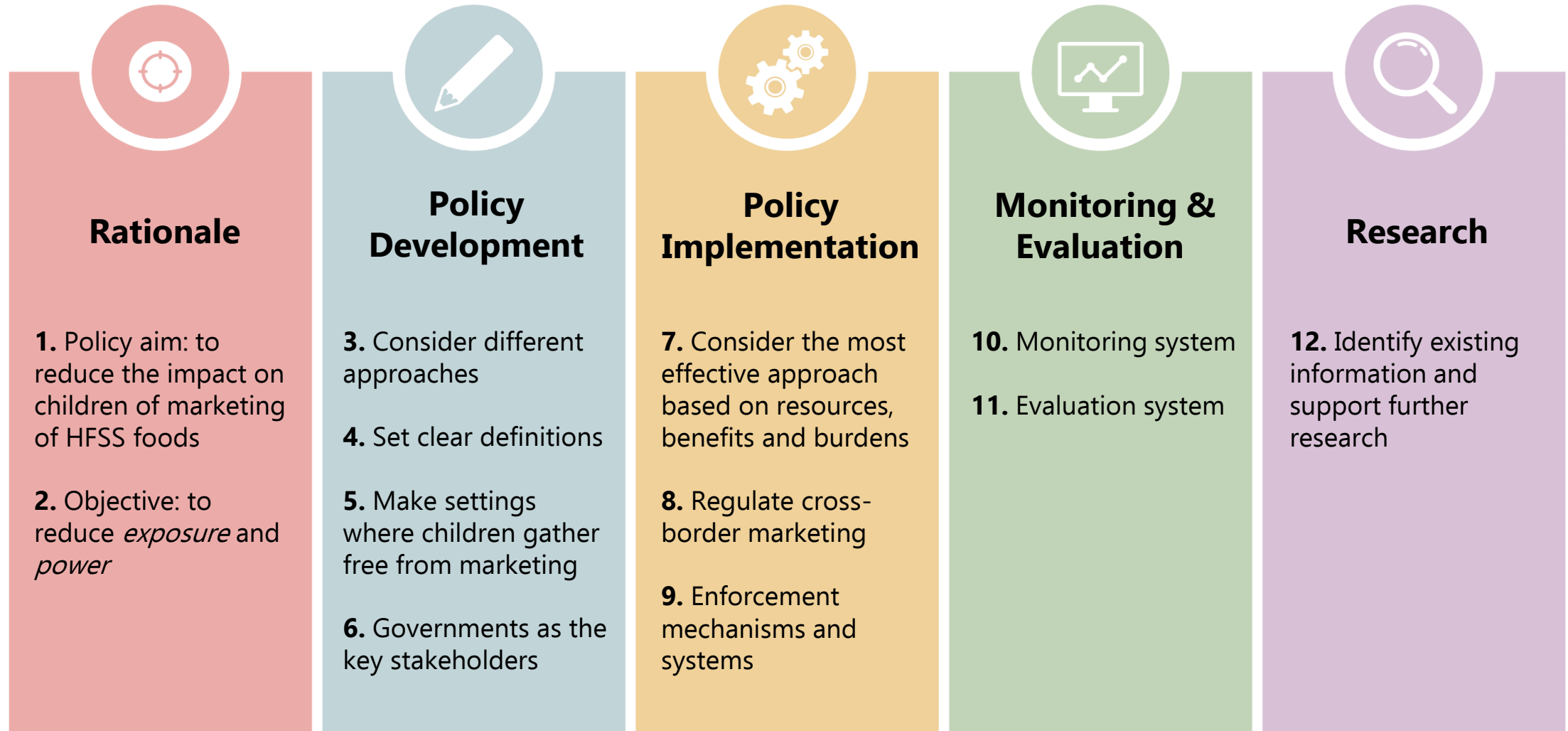
2018



2018



WHO Set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children (2010)



EVALUATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHO SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE MARKETING OF FOODS AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES TO CHILDREN

Progress, challenges and guidance for next steps
in the WHO European Region



Self-regulation by industry proven
to be ineffective



Stronger **legal frameworks and
systems** are needed





Systematic review of the effect of policies to restrict the marketing


Authors: Emma Boyland, Lauren McGale, Michelle Maden, Juliet Hounsome, Angela Boland, Andrew Jones

- WHO European Region is **lacking laws and mandatory regulations** essential to protect children from harmful marketing
- Urgent need to comprehensively **evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies**
- Evidence suggests that marketing policies may result in **reduced purchases of unhealthy foods** as well as unintended consequences favorable for public health
- Evidence on diet and product change is limited



PUBLIC HEALTH/POLICY | [Open Access](#) |  

Systematic review of the effect of policies to restrict the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to which children are exposed

Emma Boyland , Lauren McGale, Michelle Maden, Juliet Hounsome, Angela Boland, Andrew Jones

First published: 05 April 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.13447>

Main challenges

- Most action focuses on **broadcasting** and '**children's media**'
- Variety of platforms and marketing strategies (social media, product placement, influencer, gaming, etc.)
- Children are protected only if they are **below a certain age** (typically 12 or 13)
- No adopted **nutrient profile model**
- **Cross-border marketing** is not sufficiently regulated
- **Design and implementation** of effective policies

DIGITAL AGE AND ITS TRENDS

1

Increasing rates of children being online
(already starting at 3 years)

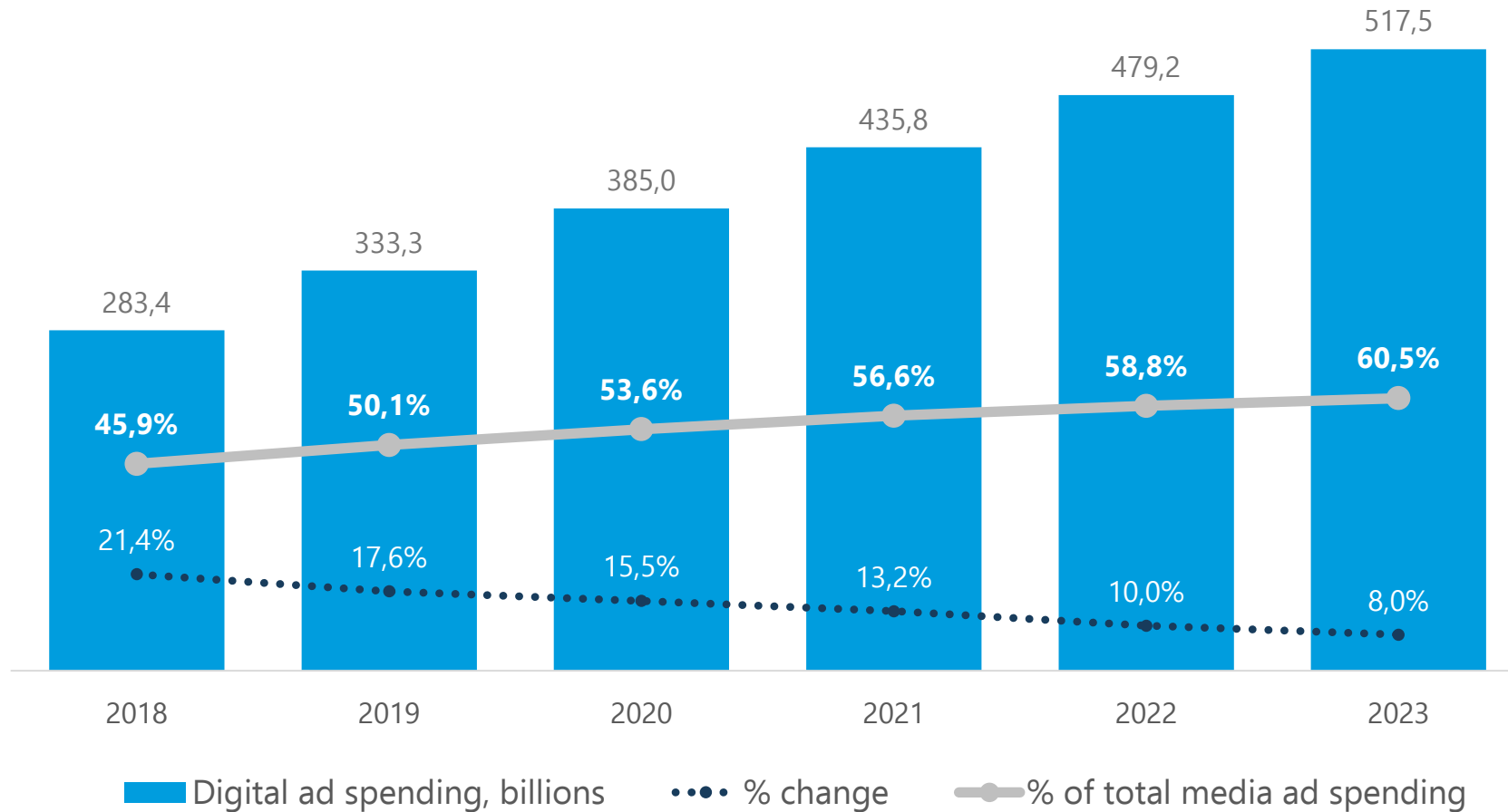
2

Light or none-existent regulations of digital
marketing of unhealthy products to children

3

Large income of big players Amazon, Facebook and
Google through advertisements - especially during
COVID-19 pandemic

DIGITAL AD STATING WORLDWIDE



Source: WHO Global Health Estimates 2020.

Digital marketing for product promotion is becoming **more popular** every year

New frontier - Influencer Marketing



Child Social Media Influencers and Unhealthy Food Product Placement

Authors: Alruwaily, A., Mangold, C., Greene, T., Arshonsky, J., Cassidy, O., Pomeranz, J. L., & Bragg, M. (2020).

- **>40%** of analyzed kid influencer videos featured food and/or drinks
- Food and/or drink product placements generated ~**16.5 million** impressions
- Nearly **90%** of those foods and drinks promoted **unhealthy** branded products

Alruwaily A, Mangold C, Greene T, et al. Child Social Media Influencers and Unhealthy Food Product Placement. *Pediatrics*. 2020;146(5):e20194057. doi:10.1542/peds.2019-4057



Ryan Pretend Play with McDonalds Toys and cook...

27M views • 10 months ago



Ryan Pretend Play with Vending Machine Soda Kids...

24M views • 9 months ago



Instagram followers control my life!!

4.1M views • 10 months ago





Effects of promotion by social media influencers

- Considered more relatable and trustworthy
- Difficult to recognize it as advertising
- Increased brand awareness, shaped product preferences



Randomized trial results: children who viewed **influencers with unhealthy snacks** had significantly increased overall intake and intake of unhealthy snacks specifically.

Coates AE, Hardman CA, Halford JCG, Christiansen P, Boyland EJ. Social Media Influencer Marketing and Children's Food Intake: A Randomized Trial. *Pediatrics*. 2019 Apr;143(4):e20182554. doi: 10.1542/peds.2018-2554. Epub 2019 Mar 4. PMID: 30833297.



CLICK

**PROJECT TO MONITOR AND CONTROL THE DIGITAL MARKETING
OF UNHEALTHY PRODUCTS AIMED AT CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

CLICK

Comprehend the digital ecosystem

CLICK

Landscape of campaigns

CLICK

Investigate exposure

CLICK

Capture on-screen

CLICK

Knowledge sharing

3. Investigate exposure

Map exposure to **paid-for digital marketing** experienced by children

Smartphone app (with consent) monitors and aggregates data on children's interaction with advertisements in some websites and social media

Investigating exposure to paid digital advertising: Analyzing RealityMeter data

Prepared by

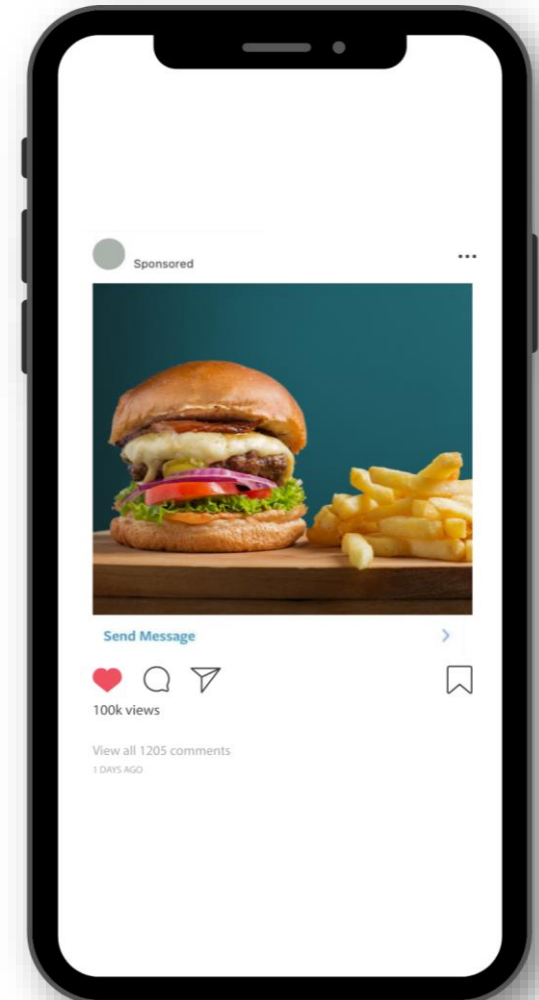
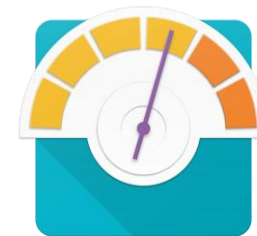
Dr Emma Boyland (University of Liverpool, UK) and Dr Mimi Tatlow-Golden (The Open University, UK)

This protocol and the WHO Regional Office for Europe CLICK framework

The WHO Euro CLICK framework¹ was developed to support countries in monitoring children's exposure to the digital marketing of unhealthy products. CLICK sets out five steps that policymakers and researchers can engage in to assess digital marketing to children, and manual methods that fulfil several of these goals (with step-by-step guidance and support) have been provided on the WHO Euro website².

Step 3 of CLICK is 'Investigate exposure'³. There are several methods currently available that can be used to address this goal, namely (i) content and exposure analyses of food marketing in social media, based on a measure or inference of popularity with children, and (ii) methods that can provide approximations of children's actual food marketing exposure⁴. See ⁴ for a review of these methods and their strengths and limitations.

RealityMeter



SIFO Report Results

Investigating exposure of digital food and drink advertisements to Norwegian children



47 children

5076 advertisements captured

1 in 10 advertisements promoted food and drink products

8 in 10 advertisements were **not permitted** to be marketed to children according to WHO's guidelines

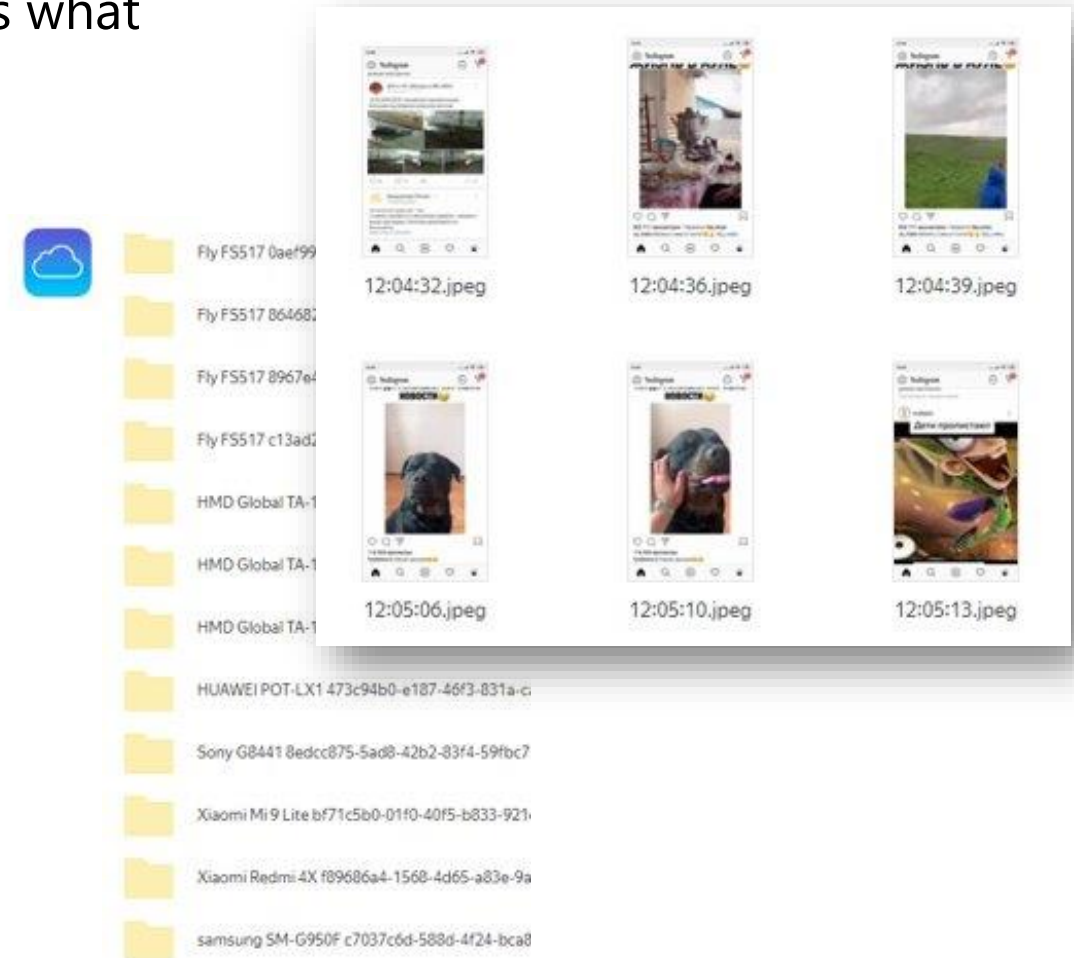


4. Capture on-screen

Use **real-time screen capture software** to assess what children actually see online on their devices

Includes:

- “earned impressions” - user-generated content from peers or social media influencers
- unbranded content
- product placement



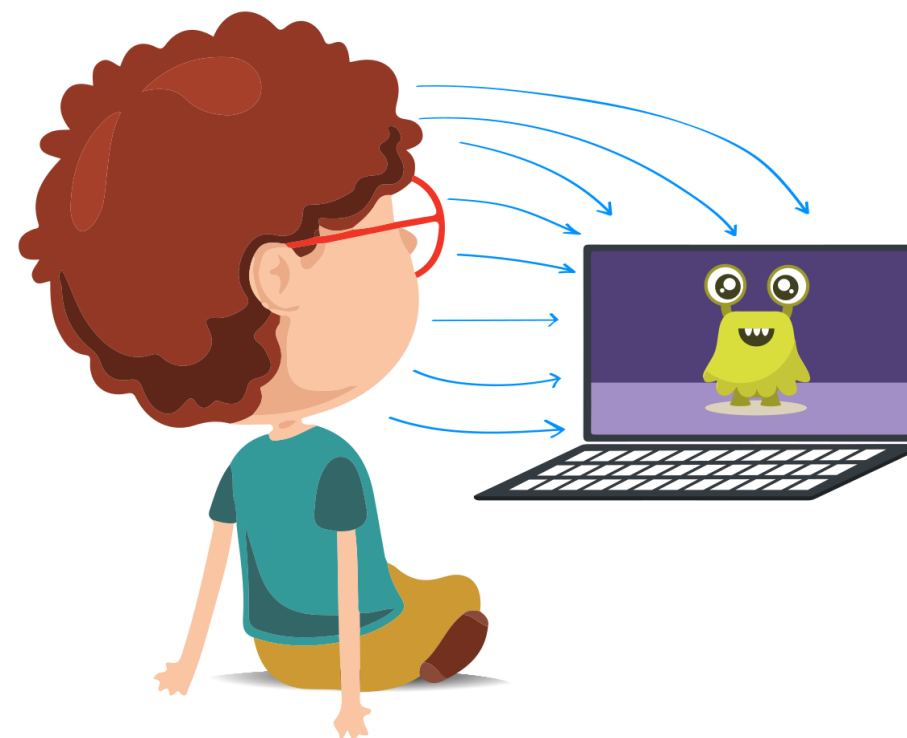
The importance of monitoring technology

Objectively measures:

- **actual exposure and engagement**
- **the persuasiveness and trends of marketing**

Evaluates:

- **effectiveness of policies**
- **compliance of industry**



Next steps



Supporting countries with
regulatory challenges



Developing guidance
documents



Drafting the marketing
model law (CIS countries)



Marketing
Network



Planning of
Legal Network

**What are WHO's
expectations towards
media regulators?**



Thank you!



WHO Regional Office for Europe

UN City
Marmorvej 51
Copenhagen Ø
Denmark

www.euro.who.int