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Executive summary

This report is part of the overall RICHFIELDS project aimed at designing a future European research infrastructure (RI) for innovative research on healthy food choices, preparation and consumption of EU-citizens and their respective relationships with socio-economic factors. The present report details the results of task 8.2, WP8, of the RICHFIELDS project. The aim has been to investigate opportunities, problems and challenges with business generated consumer data from data providers and stakeholders in both private and public sectors, as input to such an RI. For this purpose, interviews were conducted with Gothenburg City, ICA, Statistics Denmark (SD) and GfK, with the aim of extracting information related to potential ICT solutions used in data collection. A thematic analysis was carried out, by coding the content of each interview according to relevance. From these codes, themes were extracted and harmonised to understand the underlying meaning of the information content. The joint emergent themes found were that proper use of ICT tools is essential for data collection and analysis, storage in ICT data platforms and for being able to make use of social media activity.

As the overall response from the interview cases concerning ICT solutions was limited, due to informants use of proprietary data but also because the selected organisations did not show a strong use of ICT in their data collection process, the present study was complemented by an additional literature review on ICT solutions as seen from the retail perspective. These were then mapped and assessed, in terms of development and potential.

Based on the interview findings from public and private institutions, we conclude that potential ICT solution candidates to handle RICHFIELDS data are ORACLE and SQL platforms. In addition to that, it is considered important that RICHFIELDS also incorporates ICT structures for efficient data harmonisation and comparability, both at the level of the data providers and within the RI itself. Lastly, the use of social media within the RI should, at least at the beginning of the RI, be restricted to data dissemination, as the data collected from these sources cannot yet be easily validated. This is, of course, subject to change and a sustainable RICHFIELDS RI should ensure up-to-date knowledge and expertise on the latest developments in setting standards for social media tools and the data collected through these.