

Index for Tobacco Control Sustainability

COSTA RICA



The Union

International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Health solutions for the poor

INDICATORS		Present (P)/ Absent (A)	Weighted Score	Country Score
1	Prerequisite Indicator: >4 MPOWER policies in place	P	9	9
2	National tobacco control budget (annual)	P	7	7
3	National tobacco control law	P	6	6
4	National budget allocation for tobacco control capacity building	P	6	6
5	Tobacco taxation >75% of retail sales price	A	6	0
6	Tobacco taxation increases faster than inflation plus gross domestic product growth	A	6	0
7	National tobacco control unit	P	5	5
8	Civil society tobacco control network	A	5	0
9	Civil society representation in national tobacco control advisory committees	A	5	0
10	Health promotion fund for, or including, tobacco control	P	5	5
11	National policy against tobacco industry corporate social responsibility	A	5	0
12	Tobacco-related mortality and morbidity recording system	P	5	5
13	National evaluation framework in place	A	5	0
14	Evaluation built into all major policy implementation plans	P	5	5
15	National tobacco control strategy	A	4	0
16	Tobacco control and non-communicable diseases form part of national health policy	P	4	4
17	Tobacco control forms part of national development plan	A	4	0
18	Human resource for implementation (national)	P	4	4
19	Global Tobacco Surveillance System surveys	P	4	4
20	Intergovernmental coordination mechanism	A	3	0
21	Capacity building plan for tobacco control personnel	A	3	0
22	Developmental assistance funding includes tobacco control	A	3	0
23	Code of conduct for government officials and staff	A	3	0
24	Ministry of health WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy	A	3	0
25	WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy across all ministries	A	3	0
26	Economic and social tobacco costs data	A	3	0
27	National focal point post	P	3	3
28	National advisory committee	A	2	0
29	Capacity building plans on research and evaluation	A	2	0
30	Mass media campaigns funded	P	1	1
31	Capacity building plan for non tobacco control specific personnel	A	1	0
Total Score			130	64

Explanation of the scores:

1. Pre-requisite Indicator: >4 MPOWER policies in place: Costa Rica has MPOW policies in place.
2. National tobacco control budget (annual): There is a budget for tobacco control.
3. National tobacco control law: General Law on Tobacco Control and its Harmful Effects on Health.
4. National budget allocation for tobacco control capacity building: In place.
5. Tobacco taxation >75% of retail sales price: N/A
6. Tobacco taxation increases faster than inflation plus gross domestic product growth: N/A.
7. National tobacco control unit: The national tobacco control team functions under the Ministry of Health.
8. Civil society tobacco control network: N/A.
9. Civil society representation in national tobacco control advisory committees: N/A.
10. Health promotion fund for, or including, tobacco control: In place.
11. National policy against tobacco industry corporate social responsibility: N/A.
12. Tobacco-related mortality and morbidity recording system: In place.
13. National evaluation framework in place: N/A.
14. Evaluation built into all major policy implementation plans: In place.
15. National tobacco control strategy: N/A.
16. Tobacco control and noncommunicable diseases (NCD) form part of national health policy: The national health policy covers tobacco control and NCD prevention.
17. Tobacco control forms part of national development plan: N/A
18. Human resource for implementation (national): Dedicated staff exists at both national and subnational levels.
19. Global Tobacco Surveillance System surveys: in place.
20. Intergovernmental coordination mechanism: N/A.
21. Capacity building plan for tobacco control personnel: N/A.
22. Developmental assistance funding includes tobacco control: N/A.
23. Code of conduct for government officials and staff: N/A.
24. Ministry of Health WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy: N/A.
25. WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy across all ministries: N/A.
26. Economic and social tobacco costs data: N/A.
27. National focal point post: There is a dedicated tobacco control focal point at the national level.
28. National advisory committee: N/A

29. Capacity building plans on research and evaluation: N/A.
30. Mass media campaigns funded: Ministry of Health dedicates funds for supporting mass media campaigns.
31. Capacity building plan for non-tobacco-control-specific personnel: N/A

Main findings.

Progress in tobacco control sustainability since 2016

In recent years, Costa Rica has made significant strides in tobacco control. One notable achievement is the approval of the 9028 Law in 2012, which has propelled the country's efforts in monitoring tobacco use through its participation in GATS 2015 and GATS 2021. Additionally, Costa Rica has successfully implemented 100% smoke-free areas nationwide, including a comprehensive ban on smoking in public places and indoor workplaces.

To support individuals in their journey to quit smoking, the country has established clinics that offer various resources. These clinics provide guidance through online chats and other web services, as well as incorporate tobacco cessation advice into primary health-care services. Notably, this advice is easily accessible and includes free medication.

Costa Rica has also taken significant steps in terms of health warnings on tobacco products. The country employs a combined picture and text health warnings system, occupying 50% of the two principal display areas on both the front and back of tobacco product packages.

Furthermore, Costa Rica has implemented a partial ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. Although there are two exemptions to this regulation, namely adult-only venues and events without smoke-free spaces, the country directly communicates with sellers and adult clients through face-to-face encounters and in-home interactions.

Remaining gaps in tobacco control sustainability:

Several challenges remain for Costa Rica that require attention. One notable area for improvement is the absence of a free telephone quit line for cessation support. Implementing such a service would greatly enhance the country's efforts in helping individuals quit smoking.

Additionally, Costa Rica should consider adopting plain packaging regulations to further enhance tobacco control measures. Plain packaging has proven to be an effective strategy in discouraging tobacco use, and its implementation would contribute to reducing smoking rates in the country.

Furthermore, it is crucial for Costa Rica to achieve a complete ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. Such measures have been proven to be highly effective in reducing tobacco consumption and preventing the initiation of smoking among young individuals.

Another pressing issue that needs is the need to raise tobacco taxes. Currently, tobacco taxes in Costa Rica account for only 44.81% of the retail price, which falls short of the recommended minimum of 75%. A study conducted by the Ministry of Health, RENATA, and the Instituto de Efectividad Clínica y Sanitaria de Argentina has revealed that the current tax collection covers a mere 9% of the burden caused by tobacco consumption. Increasing tobacco taxes is therefore imperative to adequately address the economic and health consequences associated with smoking.