

Index for Tobacco Control Sustainability

VIET NAM



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	A	9	0
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	P	5	5
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	P	5	5
12	Tobacco-related mortality and morbidity recording system	A	5	0
13	National evaluation framework in place	P	5	5
14	Evaluation built into all major policy implementation plans	P	5	5
15	National tobacco control strategy	P	4	4
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	P	4	4
18	Human resource for implementation (national)	P	4	4
19	Global Tobacco Surveillance System surveys	P	4	4
20	Intergovernmental coordination mechanism	P	3	3
21	Capacity building plan for tobacco control personnel	P	3	3
22	Developmental assistance funding includes tobacco control	P	3	3
23	Code of conduct for government officials and staff	P	3	3
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	P	3	3
27	National focal point post	P	3	3
28	National advisory committee	P	2	2
29	Capacity building plans on research and evaluation	P	2	2
30	Mass media campaigns funded	P	1	1
31	Capacity building plan for non tobacco control specific personnel	P	1	1
Total Score			130	93

Explanation of the scores:

1. Pre-requisite Indicator: >4 MPOWER policies in place: The Viet Nam Tobacco Control Law (TC Law) 2012 has adopted most of MPOWER measures. However, Viet Nam is listed at the highest level of achievement only in two areas: 1) Monitoring the prevalence of tobacco use, and 2) Warn about the danger of tobacco (Health warning label & Anti-Tobacco mass media campaigns) in the WHO Report on the 2021 Global Tobacco Epidemic.
2. National tobacco control budget (annual): The Viet Nam Tobacco Control Fund (VNTCF) was established in 2013 as a financial fund dedicated to tobacco control, ensuring a long-term financial source for tobacco control. Funding for VNTCF comes from compulsory contribution from tobacco companies in addition to tax. Annual revenue of VNTCF is around 13 to 17 million U.S. dollars per year, making per capita tobacco control at US\$0.13–0.17. However, national budget allocation (by provinces and ministries) for tobacco control is very limited. Most of tobacco control expenditure comes from VNTCF. It is worth to note that VNTCF budget cannot be spent on enforcement of TC Law.
3. National tobacco control law: The Viet Nam TC Law was approved in 2012 and became effective in 2013. Under-law regulations guide its implementation.
4. National budget allocation for tobacco control capacity building: A proportion of VNTCF budget is allocated for capacity building for the TC network, particularly in provinces and other ministries.
5. Tobacco taxation >75% of retail sales price: Tobacco tax currently accounts for only 36.8% of the retail price. According to WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, the tax policy of countries is reflected in the four levels of share of total taxes in the retail price of the most widely sold brand of cigarettes (< 25% of the retail price, from 25% to less than 50% of the retail price, from 50% to less than 75% of the retail price, and above 75% of the retail price). Viet Nam is classified at level 2 out of a total of 4 levels.
6. Tobacco taxation increases faster than inflation plus gross domestic product growth: In January 2016, the ad valorem tax rate for tobacco increased from 65% to 70% of ex-factory price, and in January 2019, the ad valorem rate increased again from 70% to 75%. However, the tax increases have not kept pace with inflation and GDP growth. Tobacco tends to be more affordable and relatively cheaper when compared to income. Per capita GDP needed to buy cigarettes decreased from 4.49% in 2010 to 2.63% in 2020, according to WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic.
7. National tobacco control unit: The Viet Nam Steering Committee on Smoking and Health was established in 2001 by the prime minister. In 2013, VNTCF was established as a unit in MoH responsible for providing funding for tobacco control in Viet Nam. Within MoH, the Medical Service Department is the focal point on tobacco control policy making.
8. Civil society tobacco control network: Sociopolitical organizations and international and local NGOs have actively participated in implementing communication initiatives in communities. The Viet Nam NCD Alliance was established in 2015 and has been closely involved in tobacco control since then. However, funding for CSO and its role in policy making is limited. No CSO network works exclusively in tobacco control. In recent years, CSOs networks working on child rights protection and gender equality have begun to incorporate tobacco control into their work.
9. Civil society representation in national tobacco control advisory committees: The Fund's Interministerial Management Council has representatives from the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor. Vinacosh also has representatives from the Women's Union and Youth Union. However, there are no representatives from local NGOs.

10. Health promotion fund for, or including, tobacco control: VNTCF is the state financial organization dedicated for tobacco control. The fund has functions to mobilize, coordinate and provide the financial resources for tobacco control nationwide. Budget for VNTCF comes from a compulsory contribution from tobacco manufacturers and importers.
11. National policy against tobacco industry corporate social responsibility: Article 16 of the TC Law allows tobacco companies to provide philanthropy sponsorship for programs of hunger eradication and poverty reduction; prevention and control of natural disasters, epidemics, disasters; and for combating cigarette smuggling; promotion of these CSR activities, however, is restricted. It is important to note, however, that compliance of this restriction is poor, and media channels still report CSR activities by tobacco companies.
12. Tobacco-related mortality and morbidity recording system: There is no comprehensive data recording system. However, efforts are being made to improve this. The country has a system to record data related to tobacco-related cancer. VNTCF has a plan to advocate for inclusion of tobacco use history in medical record and population health system.
13. National evaluation framework in place: There is an M&E framework system, but reporting responsibilities of non-health sectors at central and local levels are not binding.
14. Evaluation built into all major policy implementation plans: According to the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents, for any policy implementation plan, an assessment of impacts of policies and report on law/policy implementation must be included. Policy implementation in tobacco control also needs to follow this regulation. The quality of evaluation needs to be improved.
15. National tobacco control strategy: the first NTCS covered the period from 2013–2020. The second NTCS for 2022–2030 has been developed and is awaiting government approval.
16. Tobacco control and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) form part of national health policy: Tobacco control and NCDs are listed in many key health policies and programs, including the Resolution 20 of the Central Committee on protection, care and improvement of people's health in the new situation, National NCD Strategy for 2015–2025, Viet Nam Health Promotion Program, and national Plan of Actions for NCD and mental health through 2025.
17. Tobacco control forms part of national development plan: Tobacco control is listed in the Viet Nam Plan of Action for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Tobacco control is also listed in the UN The One Strategic Plan 2017–2021, which represents the programmatic and operational framework for delivering United Nations (UN) support to the government of Viet Nam.
18. Human resource for implementation (national): VNTCF, the focal unit within MoH on tobacco control, has 30 full time staff. Most ministries have a focal point unit responsible for tobacco control.
19. Global Tobacco Surveillance System surveys: Viet Nam has conducted two rounds of GATS and one round of GYTS. The country is conducting a third round of GATS and a second round of GYTS.
20. Intergovernmental coordination mechanism: The Interministerial Management Council consists of representatives of many ministries. The council's main responsibility is to approve the annual plan of activity and budget of VNTCF.
21. Capacity building plan for tobacco control personnel: One of the tasks of VNTCF is developing, supporting, and building capacity for the network of collaborators on prevention and control of tobacco harms. VNTCF has an allocated budget for this work.
22. Developmental assistance funding includes tobacco control: Bilateral assistance funding for tobacco control is very limited. However, it is worth noting that ODA for Viet Nam has decreased dramatically, especially for health,

since it became a middle-income country. However, there is funding from private philanthropies for Viet Nam.

23. Code of conduct for government officials and staff: Articles 20-21-22-23 of the Anti-corruption Law are on implementation of code of conduct for office holders in state organizations.
24. Ministry of health WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy: The Ministry of Health issued instructions to provinces and ministries on noncollaboration with Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. VNTCF has a policy of noncollaboration with the tobacco industry for all grantees.
25. WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy across all ministries: Not aware of the policies of other ministries. However, all ministries that receive VNTCF grants need to sign a commitment not to collaborate with the tobacco industry.
26. Economic and social tobacco costs data: Such data exists and is being updated.
27. National focal point post: VNTCF is the focal unit within MoH on tobacco control.
28. National advisory committee: There is a Board of Advisors as stipulated in the VNTCF Charter. This board advises the fund's management board in creating the development strategy and tobacco control activities to be supported by the fund.
29. Capacity building plans on research and evaluation: One of the tasks of VNTCF is developing, supporting, and building capacity for the network of collaborators on prevention and control of tobacco harms. VNTCF has allocation for this work. The Union also supports to build VNTCF and tobacco control network in M&E. There is a Research and M&E Advisory Group, consisting of members from different research institutions, universities, and NGOs. The group provides guidance and support in building capacity in research and M&E.
30. Mass media campaigns funded: A large portion of VNTCF expenditure is for communications.
31. Capacity building plan for non-tobacco-control-specific personnel: One of the tasks of VNTCF is developing, supporting, and building capacity for the network of collaborators on prevention and control of tobacco harms. VNTCF has a budget allocated for this work.

Main findings:

Progress in tobacco control sustainability since 2016

In 2019, Viet Nam raised tobacco tax to 75% of ex-factory price. Tax increases, however, have not kept pace with inflation and GDP growth. Tobacco tends to be more affordable now and relatively cheap relative to income. Per-capita GDP needed to buy cigarettes decreased from 4.49% in 2010 to 2.63% in 2020, according to the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic. Tobacco tax still only accounts for 36.8% of the retail price. There have been increased efforts in monitoring and countering tobacco industry interference, particularly related to tax and ENDS/HTPs. During this round, the first National Tobacco Control Strategy (NTCS) was evaluated and the second NTCS was developed with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. The capacity of the TC network has strengthened, especially regarding monitoring and evaluation. Alongside with GATS survey that provides national data on tobacco use, Viet Nam introduced a provincial tobacco use survey that will continue to be implemented at provincial level every three years. The survey provides local data to help with local advocacy and planning for tobacco control at subnational level.

Changes in scores from the 2016 survey:

1. Viet Nam's score decreased to 93/130 from 103/130. The changes in scoring include:
2. In the 2016 survey, data from 2012–2014 was used to determine tax-related indicators; the 2016 tax increase meant that tobacco taxation increased faster than inflation plus GDP growth. In 2022, however, tax increases have not kept pace with inflation and GDP growth (indicator 6).
3. The adoption of the Anti-Corruption Law in 2019 resulted in the requirements for implementation of code of conduct for office holders in state organizations (indicator 23).
4. In 2016, indicator 9 was marked present, but with further reflection among partners in 2022, it was agreed that the definition of civil society does not include state-funded mass and sociopolitical organizations such as the Women's Union, Youth Union, or Trade Union. For this reason, stakeholders agreed that civil society representation is lacking in national tobacco control advisory committees in 2022 (indicator 9).
5. There is no comprehensive data system; however, the stakeholders agreed that the Ministry of Health is endeavoring to collect tobacco-related data (Indicator 12).

Remaining gaps in tobacco control sustainability

1. Stakeholders agreed on the following gaps to be addressed to ensure sustainability of tobacco control in Viet Nam:
2. Strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the TC Law.
3. Ensure adequate financial resources for tobacco control, especially for enforcement of the TC Law. This means a greater allocation of financial resources by ministries and provinces, given that VNTCF cannot directly fund enforcement drives.
4. Raise tobacco tax frequently and significantly.
5. Strengthen monitoring and countering of tobacco industry interference and develop a government-led mechanism to mitigate tobacco industry interference in TC policy making and implementation.