



Global Center for
Good Governance
in Tobacco Control



GLOBAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE INDEX

Impact on Tobacco Control Policy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This special publication is a compilation of experiences of how country collaborators have effectively utilized the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index (the Index), a global survey on how governments are responding to tobacco industry interference and protecting their public health policies from commercial and vested interests as required under the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

Editors: Mary Assunta, Yodhim Dela Rosa, Rajika Mahajan, Shivam Bose

Designer: Neil Millan Gabayeron

Country collaborators reported how they used their respective tobacco industry interference index. Without their contribution this report would not have been possible.

Contributors:

- Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam
- University of Botswana, Anti-Tobacco Network Botswana
- Fundacion Ecuatoriana de Salud Respiratoria
- National Council Against Smoking
- Indonesia Health Policy Forum (RUKKI)
- Associação Moçambicana de Saúde Pública
- Ruth Mabry, Public Health Expert
- Society for Alternative Media and Research
- Tobacco Free Association of Zambia
- NGO Anti-Corruption Headquarters

- PROGGA Knowledge for Progress
- Health Rights and Tobacco Control Network
- Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa
- Alcohol and Drug Information Centre
- Swiss Association for Tobacco Control
- Tobacco Epidemic Research Center of Uruguay
- Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance
- La Comisión Nacional de Lucha Antitabáquica
- Advocacy Center LIFE
- Corporate Accountability
- Tobacco Tactics, University of Bath
- Action on Smoking and Health – Scotland
- Action on Smoking and Health – Wales
- Coalition for a Tobacco Free Palau
- Action on Smoking and Health – USA
- First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, Prague
- ACT Promoção da Saúde
- Africa Tobacco Control Alliance
- Tobacco Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Oman

Suggested citation:

Assunta, M. Dela Rosa, Y. Mahajan R. Bose S. Tobacco Industry Interference Index – Impact on Tobacco Control Around the Globe. Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC). Bangkok, Thailand. December 2024

For more information:

www.globaltobaccoindex.org

Contents

04

Testimonials

06

Introduction

09

I. Supporting
Ministry of Health
to Fast Track
Delayed Tobacco
Control Law

19

II. Denormalizing
Tobacco Industry
Activities

21

III. Mobilizing
Effective Media
Advocacy

30

IV. Supporting
Legislators to
Incorporate Good
Governance
Elements in Policy

33

V. Progress with
Developing Article
5.3 Code of Conduct

37

VI. Improving
Transparency
Measures

40

VII. Determining
Strong Tobacco
Control Outcomes
for CoP10 Meetings

45

VIII. Building
Capacity of
Governments on TI
Interference and
Article 5.3

Testimonials



"The Asian Index shines the light on the tobacco industry's tactics to block strong measures and sway governments towards providing industry friendly regulatory environments. Countries must remain vigilant and step up their efforts in combating industry interference."

Dr Ulysses Dorotheo
Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance

"The Index has been an eye-opener, reminding us to stay vigilant about the tobacco industry that is constantly lurking around us. The Index summarizes how deeply the tobacco industry has infiltrated many governance centers, undermining efforts to keep the industry away from public health. We also use it during our interventions in the COP10 proceedings to support Article 5.3 efforts in countering tobacco industry interference in our work."

Dr Jawad Al-Lawati
Tobacco Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Oman

"The Index as a key tool of civil society to provide input to the Committee and a way to demonstrate that we are aware of the actions of legislators and the possible ways of interference from the tobacco industry in the development of tobacco control laws."

Verónica Quelal Terán
Fundacion Ecuatoriana de Salud Respiratoria and Daniel Dorado, Corporate Accountability

"With its important findings, the 2023 Africa Tobacco Industry Interference Index stands as a great advocacy tool that has enlightened African policymakers on the urgent need to put more efforts to protect their tobacco control legislation from the tobacco industry interference. We witnessed a great interest when it was presented at a special session during pre-COP10

meeting on 22 October in Entebbe to the WHO Afro Parties. We are pleased that it also caught the attention of policymakers from countries not in the survey yet."

Leonce Sessou
Africa Tobacco Control Alliance

"The official launch of the Palau TII index was a significant step forward in raising awareness about tobacco industry interference. The President of Palau declared May 2024 as Tobacco Industry Interference Awareness Month, a powerful move to highlight the issue and promote public health."

Ongerung Kambes Kesolei
Coalition for a Tobacco Free Palau

"The 2023 Index has been a key document in the approval of the Law on the Control of the Consumption of Tobacco Products, Nicotine, or Their Substitutes for the Protection of Life and Health. For the first time in Peru, this law includes a chapter on regulating the interference of the tobacco and electronic cigarette industries, marking a significant achievement for our country, especially considering the strong influence these industries have in Congress."

Flavia Radovic Ragonesi
La Comisión Nacional de Lucha Antitabáquica

"The Index has been a driving force in mobilizing media advocacy, shaping political action, and altering public perception. The sustained efforts in these domains are imperative for the advancement of tobacco control measures in Switzerland, particularly in ensuring the adequate implementation of the youth without tobacco initiative and the ratification of the WHO FCTC."

Kris Schürch
Swiss Association for Tobacco Control

Introduction

The background of the slide is a solid dark blue. Overlaid on this is a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping squares and rectangles in various shades of blue, ranging from light to dark. The pattern is composed of many small, irregular shapes that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a mosaic or a digital art style. The pattern is most prominent in the lower half of the slide, where it forms a large, abstract shape that resembles a stylized 'A' or a series of stacked blocks.

The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023¹ (GTI) is a civil society report covering 90 countries from all regions across the globe assessing how governments are protecting their tobacco control policies from the tobacco industry's influence. Many governments had singled out tobacco industry interference as the biggest challenge in implementing tobacco control measures.² Each country participating in the survey documented publicly available evidence on what the industry did in their country to delay, undermine and thwart strong tobacco control measures, and how effectively their government utilised Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)³ to address these interferences and adopt measures to guide them when interacting with the tobacco industry.

This report presents select stories from across the globe to illustrate how collaborators used their respective indexes in various ways to expose tobacco industry interference, create awareness among policy makers on the industry tactics, support and strengthen tobacco control policy, and adopt protective measures. These stories on how the Index was used aim to inspire countries to be creative and resourceful in using evidence to implement Article 5.3 and fulfill their obligations under the WHO FCTC.

THE INDEX SUPPORTS THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO FAST-TRACK DELAYED TOBACCO CONTROL LAW

Brunei Darussalam and Botswana, recipients of the inaugural GTI 2023 Integrity Award, were recognised for their achievement in putting in place strong tobacco control measures and protecting their policies from the tobacco industry interference. Brunei has guidelines issued by Prime Minister's Office prohibiting civil servants from engaging with the tobacco industry, while Botswana, against all odds passed tobacco control legislation that has incorporated elements of Article 5.3.

Ecuador's Index was used to support new health warnings on tobacco packs in Ecuador that were delayed. Meanwhile in both South Africa and Indonesia, the index was used to expose how the industry thwarted the passing of stronger tobacco control legislation. In both Mozambique and Zambia, the Ministries of Health were able to use the Index which

documented industry tactics promote the tobacco industry and delay passing national legislation compliant with the WHO FCTC. In Oman, the Index has documented how the industry conducts CSR activities to reach senior officials in non-health departments who are unaware of the requirements under Article 5.3.

DENORMALIZING TOBACCO INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES

The tobacco industry does not cease its business in countries facing war and conflict. In Ukraine, the Index was used to denormalize the tobacco industry resulting in the National Security and Defence Council listing Philip Morris International (PMI) and Japan Tobacco International (JTI) in the State Register of Sanctions as 'International Sponsors of War'. The sanction for PMI applies until October 2027.

MOBILISING EFFECTIVE MEDIA ADVOCACY

The Index was released publicly through press conferences in many countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and Uruguay. Extensive press coverage in these countries on the many ways the industry interferes in government efforts was important in raising awareness and demolishing the sanitised public image of the industry. More importantly, media advocacy urges governments to act and fulfill their responsibility to protect public health without any hindrance.

On International World Human Rights Day, the findings of the Asian Index were reflected in an OpEd published in the Inter Press Service (IPS) UN Bureau Global Issues: “Harmful Industry Blowing Smoke on Human Rights”.⁴

SUPPORTING LEGISLATORS TO INCORPORATE GOOD GOVERNANCE ELEMENTS IN POLICY

In Peru, findings of the Index were used in a landmark decision to support law which included a chapter on regulating interference from the tobacco and electronic cigarette industries. In Ukraine, the Index made it possible to counter attacks by the tobacco industry on the adopted tobacco control legislation.

PROGRESS WITH DEVELOPING ARTICLE 5.3 CODE OF CONDUCT

In Ecuador, the Index has reinforced the work that the Ministry of Health, in coordination with the Inter-Institutional Committee on Tobacco Control, leading to develop a code of conduct for the executive branch to stop attempts of interference by the tobacco industry in the development of public policies on emerging tobacco products.

The UK Index recommended improvements to the UK’s policy consultation practices which contributed towards Scotland and Wales devolved governments now having guidelines that industry-linked submissions are separated out and not used in policy development.

In Palau, the Index led to discussions with the Offices of the President, the Attorney General, and the Ethics Commission, Ministry of Human Resources, Culture, Tourism, and Development and the Ministry of Health, about advancing Palau’s preparedness to counteract tobacco industry interference.

IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY MEASURES

The USA Index was used to monitor and document the increase in tobacco industry lobbyist registered across the country. In 2023, the tobacco industry registered at least 927 state-level lobbying registrations, involving 856

lobbyists or lobbying firms.

The Czech Ministry of Health took one critical step toward ensuring transparency and urged other ministries to follow the example of the Secretariat of the Government Council for Coordination of Addiction Policy, under the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, by publishing information about their communications with representatives of manufacturers, distributors, and promoters of addiction products.

DETERMINING STRONG TOBACCO CONTROL OUTCOMES FOR COP10 MEETINGS

The presentation of Brazil and Ecuador’s indexes during the Pre-COP10 meeting which included government officials, WHO officers and various civil society organizations provided an opportunity to highlight the ongoing challenges posed by the tobacco industry interference in both countries and the region, sparking discussions on strategies to strengthen national efforts in line with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

Similarly, the presentation of the findings of the African Regional Index⁵ a special session during pre-COP10 meeting generated great interest from policy makers on the urgent need to put more efforts to protect their tobacco control legislation from the tobacco industry interference.

Findings of the Index was used by Oman during their interventions during the COP10 proceedings to support Article 5.3 efforts in countering tobacco industry interference in tobacco control efforts.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF GOVERNMENTS

The Asian Regional Index presented at WHO Western Pacific Regional Office capacity building workshop on Article 5.3 for 10 countries in April 2024, and at the Southeast Asian Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA)’s ASEAN regional meeting on protecting youths from tobacco industry interference in Bangkok in August 2024.



Supporting Ministry of Health to Fast Track Delayed Tobacco Control Law

Brunei Health Minister Cites the Index in World No Tobacco Day Message, Urges Youth to Reject Tobacco Industry Influence



“Our country has been awarded the GGTC Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023 Integrity Award, as the best performing country in 2023 for implementing Article 5.3 under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control effectively among 90 countries. ... [T]his kind of achievement does not mean that our country is exempt from being a target the sale of tobacco and nicotine products such as cigarettes and e-cigarettes. In recent decades, the tobacco industry has resorted to various strategic and aggressive marketing tactics to attract the public, especially children and adolescents. With the rise of these social media platforms and digital marketing, the tobacco industry can penetrate a wider market, targeting groups more precisely.”

Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Mohd Isham bin Haji Jaafar
Health Minister, Brunei Darussalam

Brunei’s Minister of Health called on youth to stand firm against the tobacco industry’s tactics, emphasizing the importance of youth leadership in the fight against tobacco use and urging them to resist these influences for their health and future well-being. He is advocating for stronger community and policy actions to protect future generations.⁷

The guidelines issued by the Prime Minister’s Office also prohibit civil servants from engaging with the tobacco industry. Requests from any entity for a meeting with the government are checked for any links with the tobacco industry. There are no licensed distributors of tobacco products in Brunei, and the sale of electronic cigarettes is prohibited.

GTI collaborator Dr. Siti Rosemawati Hj Md Yussof, from the Health Promotion Centre, oversees a comprehensive anti-tobacco campaign aimed at reducing smoking rates and promoting healthier lifestyles.⁸

Botswana Defies All Odds to Pass Strong Tobacco Control Law with Measures to Protect Government from Industry Interference



“The Tobacco Industry Inteference Index was instrumental in providing evidence to support our recommendations to the government to strengthen tobacco control measures. We used the Index to create awareness among Parliamentarians on the industry’s tactics to sabotage tobacco control.”

Prof Bontle Mbongwe
University of Botswana, Anti-Tobacco Network Botswana

Botswana government has incorporated the recommendations of the WHO FCTC Article 5.3 guidelines into their Tobacco Control Act. Botswana authorized the Ministry of Health to issue relevant policies as needed and prohibited incentives from being given to the tobacco industry. The law has also banned the tobacco industry from making political contributions, regardless of permissible electoral laws.

In February 2024, Botswana received the GTI Integrity Award for effectively protecting public health policies from tobacco industry influence. Following the adoption of these significant measures, Botswana made notable improvements in the GTI 2023 country ranking among the 90 countries surveyed.

Additionally, Prof. Bontle Mbongwe from the University of Botswana, a GTI collaborator and public health advocate, was awarded the prestigious WHO Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion on May 31, 2024. This esteemed award, established in 2019, recognizes her outstanding contributions to public health at both national and global levels.

Ecuadorian Index Supports the Health Ministry's Efforts to Strengthen Tobacco Control Measures



Ecuador's Fundación Ecuatoriana de Salud Respiratoria and Corporate Accountability held a meeting with the Undersecretary of Surveillance, Prevention, and Health Control of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), along with other government health officials, to distribute the Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index and coordinate joint actions.

The Index has strengthened the MoPH's efforts in collaboration with the Inter-Institutional Committee on Tobacco Control to develop a code of conduct for the executive branch aimed at preventing tobacco industry interference.

Furthermore, the Right to Health Commission is reviewing a proposed reform to the draft law on the Control and Regulation of Tobacco. The Index will serve as a vital tool for civil society, providing oversight on the commission's actions and exposing any instances of tobacco industry interference in the development of tobacco control laws.

“The tobacco industry interference index is a tool that provides the Ministry of Health, the National Assembly and municipalities with information on the way the industry seeks to be part of the discussions on tobacco control actions carried out in Ecuador.”

Verónica Quelal Terán
Fundacion Ecuatoriana de Salud Respiratoria

South Africa Index Strengthens Advocacy in Tobacco Control Bill Hearings



In November 2023, the National Council Against Smoking launched the South Africa Tobacco Industry Interference Index through a hybrid workshop which provided valuable information helping advocates shape their messages for oral submissions during the Tobacco Control Bill Public Consultation Hearings in South Africa. The findings from the South African Index enabled advocates to emphasize how delays in policy reforms continue to benefit the tobacco industry.

They particularly highlighted the four-and-a-half-year delay in passing the Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery Systems Control Bill of 2022. Advocates were also able to argue how tobacco and e-cigarette companies have capitalized on the lack of regulation for e-cigarettes.

Moreover, the data helped identify South Africa's continued underperformance in implementing Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, specifically pointing out the absence of a code of conduct for government officials' interactions with tobacco companies, lack of transparency requirements, and the insufficient awareness among non-health departments about tobacco industry interference.

“The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index has been a critical tool in our advocacy efforts in South Africa, particularly as we navigate the legislative process with the Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery Systems Control Bill currently before parliament. Since the release of the latest country Index, we've consistently used it in engagements with policymakers to expose the tobacco industry's interference. Importantly, we have used the regional and global reports to show that industry tactics in South Africa are not isolated—that they're part of a global strategy.

Recently, we used the Index as evidence of industry interference in a call to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), urging them to address Philip Morris International's sponsorship of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) event. We are advocating for clear guidelines to prevent tobacco industry funding and partnerships in CPD activities. The Index has been instrumental in advancing policies that prioritize public health over profit and reminding government of its obligations under Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.”

Dr Sharon Nyatsanza
National Council Against Smoking

Indonesia Index Exposes Tobacco Industry Interference in the New National Health Law and Delays in the Development of Implementing Regulations



“The Tobacco Industry Interference Index is an essential tool for evaluating the Indonesian government’s commitment to public health. It provides the only available measure to monitor the tobacco industry attempts to influence health policies. Additionally, the Index uncovers government collaborators who have acted as barriers to public health progress. By shedding light on these tactics, the Index empowers the public to support stronger tobacco control measures and protect future generations in Indonesia.”

Mouhamad Bigwanto
Indonesia Health Policy Forum (RUKKI)

The Indonesia Health Policy Forum (RUKKI) and co-author, Yayasan Lentera Anak, released the report “Tobacco Industry Interference in Undermining Health Law and Regulations in Indonesia” which reveals how the development of both the new health law and its implementing regulations were hindered by interference from the tobacco industry and its allies.⁹

The report confirms the accuracy of the 2023 Tobacco Industry Interference Index by RUKKI. It highlights how the tobacco industry and its front groups employed various tactics and arguments to oppose regulations that could negatively impact their business interests. Despite this, the implementing Government Regulations were approved on July 26, 2024.

These findings should prompt the government to ensure that health policies are shielded from industry interference. Indonesia needs a whole-of-government approach to implement stricter guidelines to address conflicts of interest with the tobacco industry and protect health policies from being undermined.

Mozambique Index Used to Address Delays and Advance Tobacco Control Law



“Because the tobacco industry has substantially increased its interference around the world using different tactics, the Index is of paramount importance to our government institutions, particularly those responsible for protecting public health policies.”

Francisco Valentino Cabo
Associação Moçambicana de Saúde Pública

The Mozambique Public Health Association (AMOSAPU) presented the Mozambique Tobacco Industry Interference Index in January 2024 to Members of Parliament, the Tobacco Control Focal Point, senior officials from the Ministry of Health (MoH), and representatives from the WHO country office and UNESCO.

According to the Tobacco Control Focal Point at the Ministry of Health, efforts are underway to advance comprehensive tobacco control legislation as soon as possible to counter tobacco industry interference. A multisectoral working group, which includes AMOSAPU, has reviewed the legislation, and it is now progressing through the approval process.

The draft is currently with the Consultative Council of the Ministry of Health, and once approved, it will be sent to the Council of Ministers and eventually to Parliament for adoption as the National Tobacco Control Law.

Oman is Using the Index to Strengthen its Tobacco Control



“Tobacco distributors in Oman are large business conglomerates with vast portfolios beyond tobacco. The Tobacco Industry Interference Index has been very useful in understanding the breadth of their activities and potential areas of influence in policy development in a systematic way. By doing this, we know how to shape advocacy messages on specific policy gaps so that the country can better implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and protect the health and well-being of the people in Oman.”

Dr Ruth Mabry
Public Health Expert

Tobacco control in Oman faces challenges as the tobacco industry is represented by distributors who also handle other products. Oman’s Index was presented to key members of the Ministry of Health in September 2023, and was well received.

The national launch of the Oman Index was part of a three-day national multisectoral workshop focused on advancing tobacco control efforts in the country. The workshop examined how best to support the government in implementing new regulations on plain packaging, addressing tobacco industry interference, applying custom stamps on all tobacco products, and enhancing tobacco taxation. Additionally, the government is looking to further strengthen tobacco control measures, particularly tobacco-related corporate social responsibility activities.

Pakistan's Deterioration in the Index is Reflected in the Tobacco Industry Tactics to Step-up Influence on Policy to Further its Business



“The Pakistan Tobacco Industry Interference Index provides a comprehensive, evidence-based framework for assessing and communicating issues related to tobacco industry interference. Promoting transparency and driving accountability ensures that stakeholders can make informed decisions and take appropriate action to counter industry influence.”

Zeeshan Danish
Society for Alternative Media and Research

Pakistan's Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR) recorded a deterioration in performance and ranking in the 2023 Index reflecting a higher level of industry interference. Launching their fourth Index in December 2023, SAMAR reported this interference poses a threat to efforts aimed at reducing tobacco use and its associated health risks.¹⁰

In June 2024, the Guardian exposed¹¹ how Pakistan Tobacco Company (PTC), British American Tobacco's (BAT) local subsidiary, has lobbied the government at the highest level¹² to reverse the ban on kiddie packs (10 sticks), which would require amending the law instituted in 2012, claiming it wants to manufacture these small-sized packs for export to Sudan, a war-torn African country. As parties to the WHO FCTC, both Pakistan and Sudan are obligated under Article 16 to prohibit small cigarettes packs. The Ministry of Health has remained steadfast in its obligations, but has been criticized for delaying the approval process which apparently affects BAT's projected \$60 million in exports for its next fiscal year.

SAMAR has condemned this interference from PTC as an unacceptable strategy to exploit regulatory differences across continents to market harmful products to vulnerable populations and stated that permitting the manufacture of these kiddie packs, even if not sold domestically, contradicts the spirit of our public health goals and international obligations.¹³

Zambia Index Strengthens Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Accountability



In Zambia, the Index has played a crucial role in exposing the manipulative tactics employed by the tobacco industry, particularly within its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Many government ministries were previously unaware of the true intentions behind the tobacco industry's activities, often perceiving CSR efforts as genuine contributions to public welfare. The Index has helped uncover the industry's strategy of using CSR as a tool to gain favour and influence public health policies, thereby undermining efforts to reduce tobacco consumption. This exposure has significantly raised awareness among Zambian policymakers about the deceptive practices of the tobacco industry and its long-term harmful impact on public health.

“The Index has been very useful in the exposure of tobacco industry tactics and influential in echoing the need for the Zambian Government to enact the Tobacco Control Bill.

It has also helped in making key stakeholders realize the impact of tobacco consumption on public health, compelling senior government officials and parliamentarians to join and support tobacco control advocacy. Some have pledged to support the Tobacco Control Bill once it is tabled in Parliament.”

Brenda Chitindi
Tobacco Free Association of Zambia

Tobacco Free Association of Zambia, is now a lead organization in the Tobacco Industry Monitoring Response, a program exposing the tobacco industry interference activities in Zambia, a program supported by Africa Tobacco Control Alliance.



Denormalizing Tobacco Industry Activities

Ukraine Labels PMI and JTI as International Sponsors of War



“The tobacco industry actively exploits the state of war to cleanse its reputation and attempts to weaken existing bans. We have cases where PMI funded the opening of generator-equipped points in major Ukrainian cities, while in 2022, it generated a revenue of \$7.9 billion in Russia. Another example is how tobacco companies unjustifiably demanded the suspension of the implementation of the Euro-integration Directive 2014/40/EU. Fortunately, the Ukrainian Parliament stood up for health protection.”

Serhiy Mytkalyk
NGO Anti-Corruption Headquarters

Ukraine's Tobacco Industry Interference Index was compiled during a difficult time, as the country remained at war. Despite these challenging circumstances, advocates continued to expose the industry's tactics to exploit the war and undermine tobacco control measures through the media. In 2022 and 2023, advocacy using the Index helped repel attacks by the tobacco industry on existing anti-tobacco legislation.

A positive outcome from denormalizing the tobacco industry is that the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine has listed Philip Morris International (PMI)¹⁴ and Japan Tobacco International (JTI) in the State Register of Sanctions as 'International Sponsors of War'. The sanction for PMI applies until October 2027. Ongoing media coverage of the tax privileges enjoyed by tobacco companies has further helped denormalize them.

According to the EU Reporter, PMI has steadily increased its revenue in Russia over the past three years and is among the top five foreign companies contributing taxes to the Russian budget.¹⁵ Meanwhile, PMI enjoys a preferential ad valorem tax rate of 12% in Ukraine, a rate not found in any other country.



Mobilizing Effective Media Advocacy

Bangladesh Index Raises Awareness on Industry Interference



In Bangladesh, PROGGA hosted a webinar launch that brought together policymakers, government officials, journalists, and tobacco control advocates. The chief guest at the event was Mr. Saber Hossain Choudhury, Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Climate Change and an Article 5.3 champion, and the former coordinator of the National Tobacco Control Cell Mr. Hossain Ali Khondoker attended the event as a special guest. This event resulted in the publication of 48 media stories, significantly raising awareness about the prevalent tobacco industry interference.

“Impact of the Index is clearly visible in Bangladesh. In September 2024, the National Tobacco Control Cell of the Health Service Division under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare took the initiative to develop a Draft Guideline for Implementing WHO FCTC Article 5.3 within the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and its Affiliated Offices/ Institutions. The adoption of the Article 5.3 code of conduct for all government officials has been one of the pressing recommendations of the Tobacco Industry Interference Index country reports since 2018. If the guideline is finalized soon, it will be a significant leap towards thwarting interference and denormalization of the tobacco industry.”

ABM Zubair
PROGGA Knowledge for Progress

Nepal Index Exposes Tobacco's Deadly Impact and Industry Influence Through Media Outreach



"The Index has been instrumental in exposing how the tobacco industry undermines health regulations in Nepal. Through the Index we have raised public awareness and strengthened our advocacy for stricter tobacco control measures."

Shanta Lall Mulmi
Health Rights and Tobacco Control Network

In cooperation with Media Alliance Nepal, a journalist forum, the Health Rights and Tobacco Control Network (HRTCN) published a two-page article across several news outlets to raise public awareness about the dangers of tobacco use.

The article highlights several critical issues related to tobacco control and regulation in Nepal. HRTCN emphasized the severe impact of tobacco use in the country, noting that more than 73 people die each day from tobacco-related illnesses. Additionally, the economic burden is significant, with approximately 470 billion rupees spent on tobacco consumption.

The article also cites statistics and reports from the WHO, the Nepal Health Research Council, and the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index, collectively underscoring the seriousness of the issue. It further points out that the implementation of the Tobacco Control and Regulation Law in Nepal is being undermined by interference from the tobacco industry.

Nigeria Decries Insidious Tobacco Industry's Interference in Public Health



"The Index has been particularly helpful to media practitioners in Nigeria focused on health issues, providing them with insights into the various tactics used by tobacco companies to undermine public health. It has encouraged these journalists to center their reporting on exposing the industry's harmful behaviour and demanding accountability from state authorities."

Akinbode Oluwafemi
Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa

In Nigeria, Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA), emphasized that "the tobacco industry has ramped up its efforts to derail public health policies, actively working to undermine the actions of governments aimed at protecting the well-being of their citizens." CAPPA's director, Akinbode Oluwafemi, pointed out that despite Nigeria's progress in tobacco control, these efforts are being compromised by the tobacco industry, which takes advantage of certain government officials to push its agenda.

Akinbode Oluwafemi also highlighted the Index, which reveals the wide range of tactics used by the tobacco industry to weaken and exploit national health measures. The Index further illustrates how these companies prey on the inconsistencies and gaps in governmental regulations and cohesion, making it more difficult for the country to implement effective health protections. CAPPA's findings underscore the need for stronger, unified governmental action to resist tobacco industry interference and ensure that public health policies remain focused on protecting the population rather than serving corporate interests.

Extensive Media Coverage Boosts Efforts to Counter Tobacco Industry Interference in Pakistan



“The widespread media exposure has amplified the message about the urgent need to address the industry’s tactics in undermining public health efforts.”

Ashfaq Ahmad
Society for Alternative Media and Research

Media coverage surrounding the release of the Index has been extensive, with 25 newspapers publishing reports that highlight its findings and significance. Among these, an article in the Pakistan Observer, a leading English daily, brought further attention to the critical issue of tobacco industry interference in national health policies.

The Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR) capitalized on this momentum by using the Index as a tool to engage with newly elected officials. SAMAR aims to build relationships with these leaders to foster a healthier, more transparent policy-making environment, free from the harmful influence of the tobacco industry. By initiating dialogues with the new administration, SAMAR hopes to encourage stronger implementation of tobacco control laws, stricter regulations, and a commitment to protecting public health from corporate interference. SAMAR sees this moment as a vital opportunity to advocate for change and ensure that tobacco industry interests do not impede the progress of national health initiatives.

Sri Lanka Warns Consequences of Relaxed Policies on Tobacco



“Sri Lanka Index serves as a vital resource that guides government officials, media and policy makers to expose tobacco industry interference, advocate for stronger enforcement, and prevent future interference. The comparison of Sri Lanka Index in previous years provides clear insights into tobacco industry interference, holding relevant officials accountable and compelling them to take action to minimize tobacco industry interference.”

Sampath De Seram
Alcohol and Drug Information Centre

The Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC), Sri Lanka, officially launched its country’s Tobacco Industry Interference Index through a press conference, drawing significant attention from key stakeholders. The event saw active participation from 22 media representatives across various outlets, along with members of civil society and youth organizations, underscoring the importance of a multi-sectoral approach in combating tobacco industry interference.

During the press conference, ADIC addressed several pressing topics. They highlighted the importance of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which calls for governments to protect public health policies from the vested interests of the tobacco industry. They also elaborated on the findings of the newly released Index, outlining the various tactics employed by the tobacco industry to weaken tobacco control measures. ADIC further emphasized the critical need for a scientifically sound tax policy on tobacco products, which would not only serve as an effective deterrent to tobacco use but also ensure proper regulation of the industry.

The press conference generated widespread media coverage, with the information disseminated through multiple channels. It was featured in six major newspapers, two television news programs, and three radio broadcasts. Additionally, seven prominent websites published reports on the event, helping to spread awareness and promote discussion around the tobacco industry’s influence and the need for stronger tobacco control policies. This broad media exposure helped amplify ADIC’s message, reaching diverse audiences and reinforcing the urgency of protecting public health from corporate interference.

Switzerland Index Instrumental in Supporting Political Advocacy and Altering Public Opinion Against Tobacco Industry



“The Index has been a driving force in mobilizing media advocacy, shaping political actions, and altering public perception. The sustained efforts in these domains are imperative for the advancement of tobacco control measures in Switzerland, particularly in ensuring the adequate implementation of the ‘Youth Without Tobacco’ initiative and the ratification of the WHO FCTC.”

Kris Schürch
Swiss Association for Tobacco Control

The Index has played an important role in criticizing Switzerland's weak prevention of tobacco industry interference. By shedding light on the tobacco-related health crisis and the pervasive influence of the tobacco industry within the country, it has prompted an outcry.

Following the 2023 report's release, a substantial wave of media coverage swept across various platforms, from print press to online publications and radio broadcasts. This surge in media attention has been instrumental in supporting political advocacy, altering public opinion, and gradually eroding the tobacco industry's social standing. The 2023 GTI report underscored the significant strides Switzerland must still take for comprehensive tobacco control measures and was a call for action – with important steps being the implementation of the ‘Youth Without Tobacco’ initiative and the ratification of the WHO FCTC.

Uruguay Index Gains Attention Across Social Media and National Platforms



“The 2023 Index was key and timely for Uruguay, because it had a greater impact than previous ones.

As the current government had passed some decrees that setback tobacco control policies, the report generated media articles and social media comments from significant communicators and politicians that put pressure on the current authorities.”

Dr Eduardo Bianco
Tobacco Epidemic Research Center of Uruguay

The Tobacco Epidemic Research Center of Uruguay (CIET) marked a significant milestone with the official launch of its fourth Index on November 14, 2023. The event was strategically rolled out through a combination of a webinar and a press conference, ensuring broad engagement with both stakeholders and the public. This dual-format launch allowed for a comprehensive discussion on the Index’s findings and the pressing issue of tobacco industry interference in Uruguay’s public health policies.

CIET effectively leveraged a variety of media channels to maximize the Index’s reach. The information was disseminated across television, radio, and major newspapers, ensuring that a wide audience was informed about the findings. Social media played an equally pivotal role, with the content being widely retweeted, including by prominent figures such as members of the National Legislative Party and key influencers. This helped amplify the conversation and foster greater public awareness of the tobacco industry’s tactics in undermining health policies.

A highlight of the launch was the participation of Dr. Eduardo Bianco, a leading expert on tobacco control, who attended a special interview on MVD Noticias, the media channel of the Municipal Administration of Montevideo. During the interview, Dr. Bianco provided a preview of the key points from the 2023 Index, underscoring the tobacco industry’s influence on policy-making and the importance of strong, independent public health measures to counteract this interference. His insights, broadcast on a widely viewed platform, further elevated the visibility of the Index and emphasized the need for urgent action in Uruguay.

Asian Index is Cited on International Human Rights Day

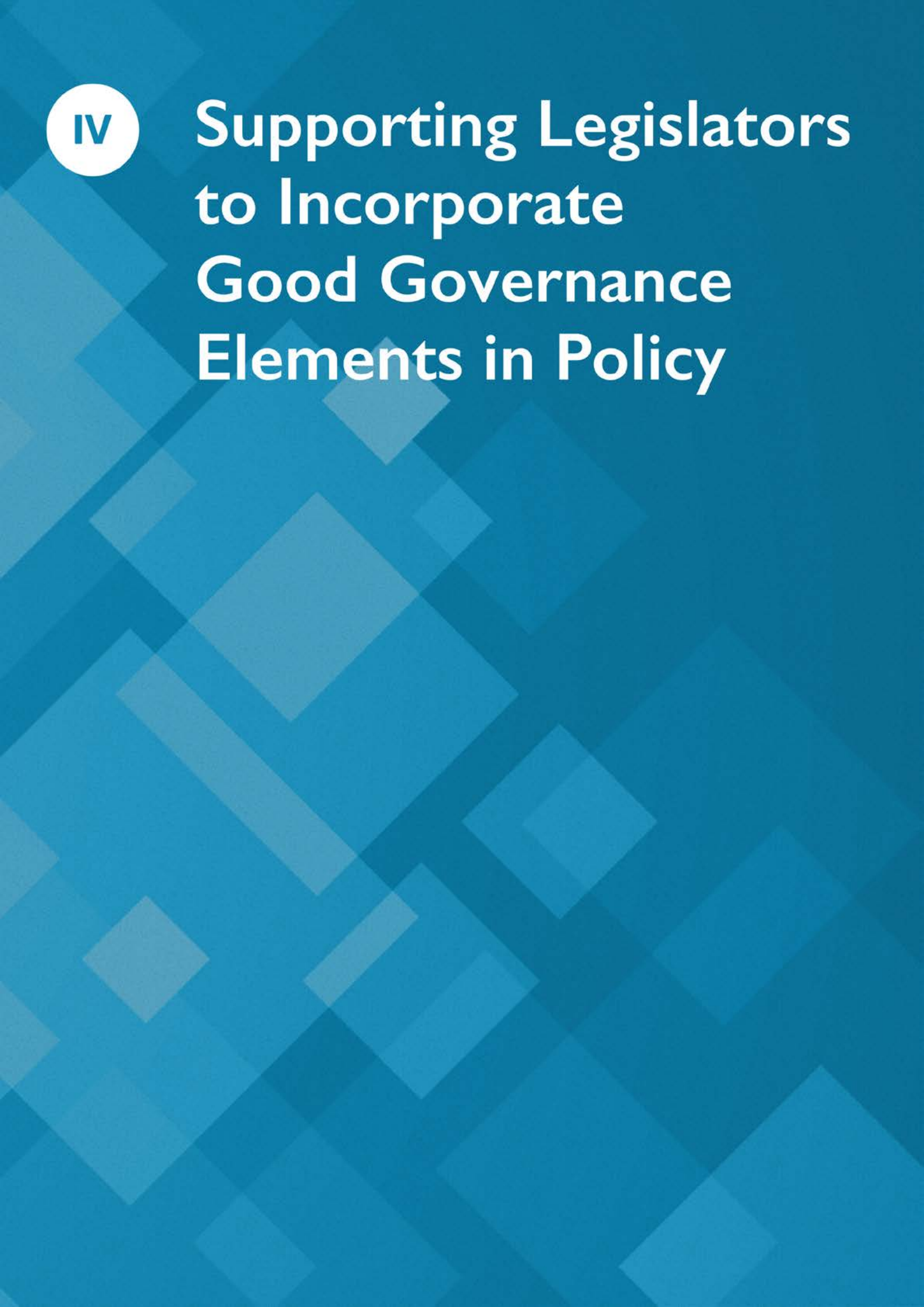


On Human Rights Day, the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) highlighted the stark contradiction posed by the tobacco industry, which is responsible for 8 million deaths annually and numerous health issues worldwide.

Referring to findings from the Asian Index, SEATCA emphasized how the tobacco industry has obstructed government efforts to safeguard public health. The industry has intimidated /pressured governments with legal threats, manipulated policymakers by presenting misleading data to promote tobacco as a sound investment, and engaged in so-called charitable activities during crises to improve its tarnished reputation.

“The tobacco business and human rights are diametrically opposed. Despite causing 8 million annual deaths and a myriad of diseases, the tobacco industry has enjoyed six decades of the legal right to manufacture and sell its harmful products.¹⁶ This travesty to human rights remains unaddressed with no admission of liability, compensation for victims, or withdrawal of the product.”

Irene Reyes
Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance



IV

Supporting Legislators to Incorporate Good Governance Elements in Policy

Congresswoman Camones Champions Tobacco Control Bill in Parliament in Peru



“The 2023 Index has been a key document in the approval of the Law on the Control of the Consumption of Tobacco Products, Nicotine, or Their Substitutes for the Protection of Life and Health. For the first time in Peru, this law includes a chapter on regulating the interference of the tobacco and electronic cigarette industries, marking a significant achievement for our country, especially considering the strong influence these industries have in Congress.”

Flavia Radovic Ragonesi
La Comisión Nacional de Lucha Antitabáquica

In a landmark decision, the plenary session of Congress has passed the Law on the Control of the Consumption of Tobacco, Nicotine Products, or Their Substitutes for the Protection of Life and Health. For the first time in Peru, this law includes a chapter dedicated to regulating interference from the tobacco and electronic cigarette industries.

Key measures introduced by the new law include a total ban on advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of tobacco products, the regulation of electronic cigarettes, and the implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC to counter industry interference. Other notable provisions include expanding smoke-free areas, increasing health warnings on packaging, and requiring transparency from the industry regarding product contents.

The Index played a vital role in shaping these regulations, countering the strong influence of the tobacco industry on Congress. The Index was presented to an audience of 128 individuals, including state officials, journalists, and members of civil society. This event not only shed light on the extensive tactics used by the tobacco industry to weaken health policies but also provided a platform for key stakeholders to discuss the next steps in advancing tobacco control measures.

As Peru works towards stronger tobacco control regulations, the presentation of the Index to such a diverse and influential group reinforces the need for transparency, collaboration, and vigilance. Congresswoman Lady Camones' leadership in championing this bill, combined with the efforts of government officials and civil society, signals a determined push toward a healthier, more protected future for the country.

Ukraine Advocates Present Index to Parliamentarians

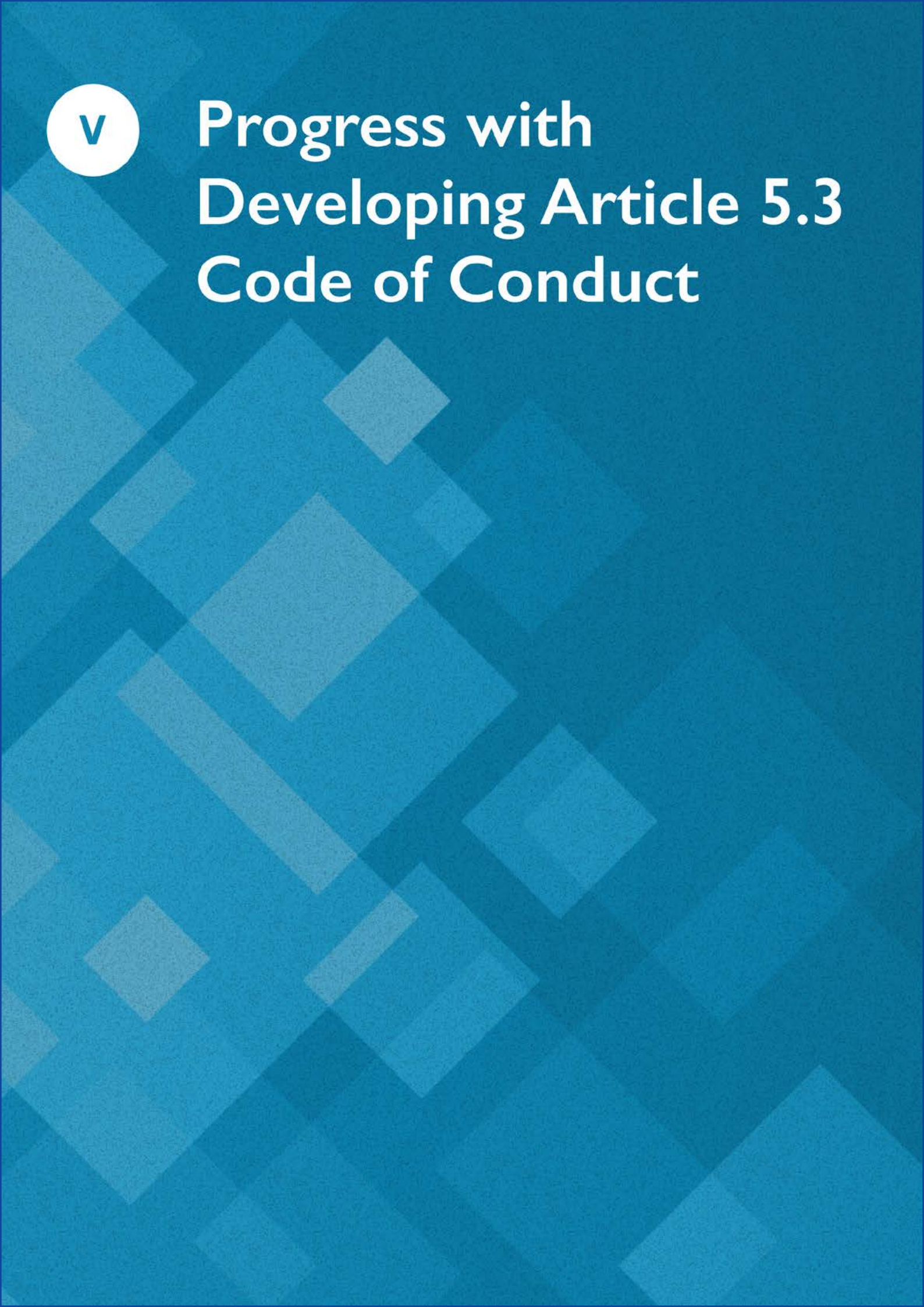


“The Index helped Ukraine demonstrate progress in reducing the level of tobacco industry interference. Thanks to this progress, in December 2021, the comprehensive anti-tobacco law 1978-IX was passed, which strengthened the implementation of the WHO FCTC. In 2022 and 2023, the Index made it possible to repel attacks by the tobacco industry on the adopted anti-tobacco legislation.”

Dmytro Kupyra
Advocacy Center LIFE

In addition to the Ukraine’s Ministers of Health and Finance, who attended the presentation of the findings of the 2023 Index, several other high-profile figures were present, underscoring the importance of the event. Among the attendees were the Head of the Anti-Corruption Committee of the Parliament of Ukraine and the Chairperson of the Parliament of Ukraine Committee on Public Health. Their participation highlighted the growing recognition of the need for a concerted, whole-of-government approach to combat the influence of the tobacco industry in Ukraine.

The Index served as a critical tool for advocates, parliamentarians, and government officials alike, providing concrete evidence of the tobacco industry's interference and enabling a unified front to push back against industry-driven attacks. The discussions at the event marked a pivotal moment for tobacco control in Ukraine, as stakeholders from across government and civil society committed to protecting the country's anti-tobacco laws and advancing public health initiatives, free from the undue influence of the tobacco industry.



v

Progress with Developing Article 5.3 Code of Conduct

Ecuador - The Index as Civil Society's Key Tool to Keep a Watching Brief on Legislators



“The Index as a key tool of civil society to provide input to the Committee and a way to demonstrate that we are aware of the actions of legislators and the possible ways of interference from the tobacco industry in the development of tobacco control laws.”

Fundacion Ecuatoriana de Salud Respiratoria and
Corporate Accountability

In Ecuador, the Index has reinforced the work that the Ministry of Health, in coordination with the Inter-Institutional Committee on Tobacco Control, is leading to develop a code of conduct for the executive branch to stop attempts of interference by the tobacco industry in the development of public policies on emerging tobacco products.¹⁷ The Index has provided concrete evidence of the tobacco industry's tactics, allowing the Ministry to bolster its stance on safeguarding public health policies from undue influence and ensuring that policy development remains focused on protecting the well-being of the population.

Moreover, the Index played a pivotal role in shaping Ecuador's participation in the COP10 and MOP3 sessions, enabling the country to make important proposals during the meetings, such as leading the Americas region's statement on maximizing transparency.

Scotland and Wales Adopt the UK Index Recommendation to Exclude Industry from Regulatory Consultations



Sheila Duffy of ASH-Scotland who led advocacy efforts in Scotland

"The 2023 UK Index recommended improvements to the UK's policy consultation practices.¹⁸ The Scotland and Wales devolved governments have now for the first time stated unequivocally in their consultation guidelines that industry-linked submissions are separated out and not used in subsequent policy development, in line with UK Index recommendations."

Dr Raouf Alebshehy
Tobacco Tactics, University of Bath

Scotland and Wales have adopted the UK Index's recommendation to exclude industry recommendations from regulatory consultations in three instances to date. This positive outcome stems from the University of Bath's ongoing advocacy with the Welsh Parliament Senedd CPG on smoking and health and the Scottish government, in collaboration with ASH Wales and ASH Scotland.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in England also clarified that it does not use industry-linked responses in policy development, in a legal response to an industry challenge regarding the Tobacco and Vapes Bill. Another UK Index recommendation has been to ensure Article 5.3 is applied across all branches of government. In 2023, DHSC produced new government-tobacco industry engagement guidance. The Secretary of State for health then said that DHSC will monitor whether its guidance is being properly enforced by monitoring the UK's rank in the Global Tobacco Interference Index.

Palau: The Index Formed Part of the President's Proclamation



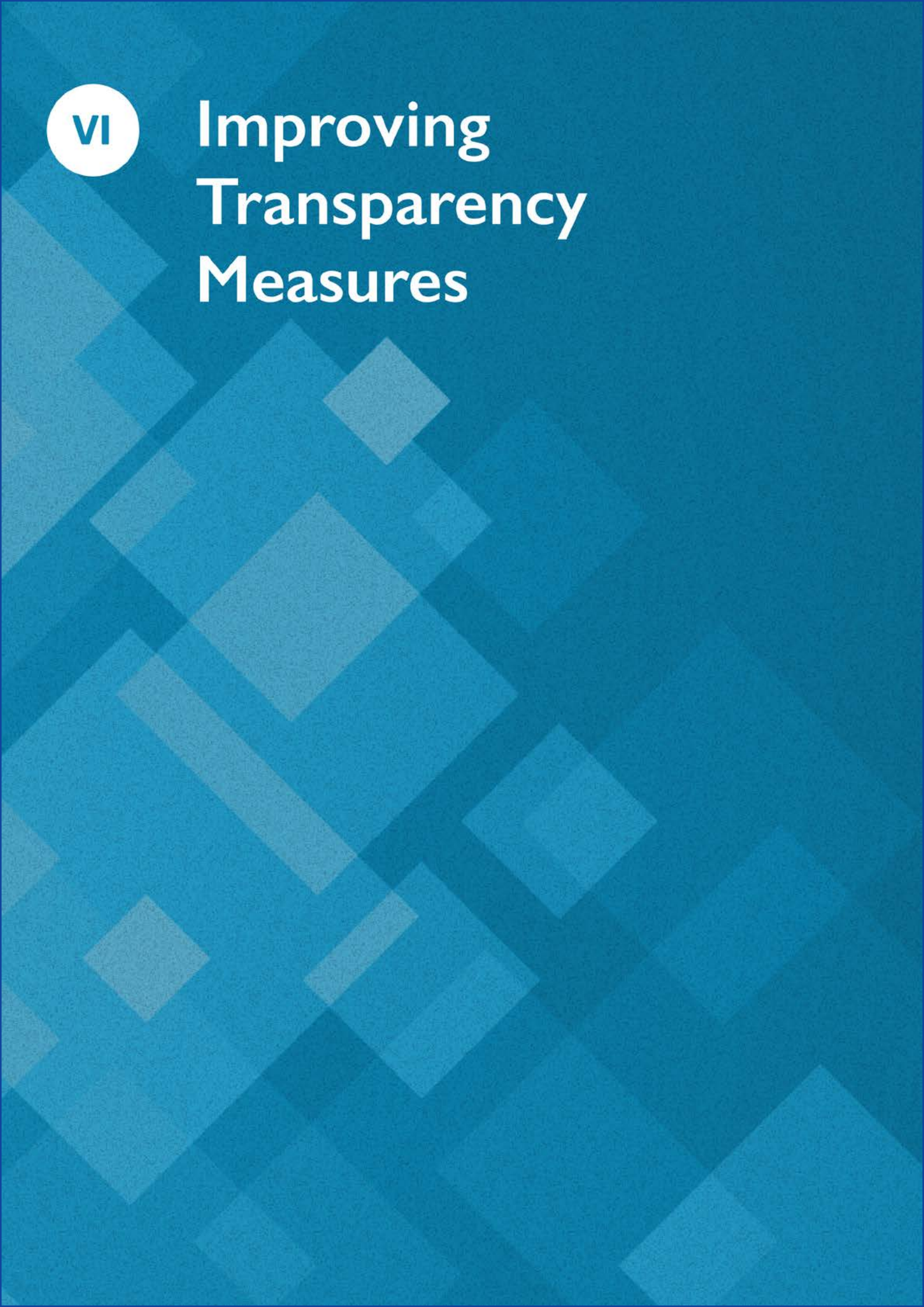
“The official launch of the Palau TII index was a significant step forward in raising awareness about tobacco industry interference. The President of Palau declared May 2024 as Tobacco Industry Interference Awareness Month and May 31st as World No Tobacco Day in Palau, a powerful move to highlight the issue and promote public health.

The release of the Index has already led to discussions with representatives from the Offices of the President, the Attorney General, and the Ethics Commission as well as from the Ministry of Human Resources, Culture, Tourism, and Development and the Ministry of Health, about advancing Palau's preparedness to counteract tobacco industry interference. These efforts can play a pivotal role in protecting public health policies from being undermined by industry interests.”

Ongerung Kambes Kesolei
Coalition for a Tobacco Free Palau

On May 1, Palau's President signed a landmark proclamation designating May as Tobacco Industry Interference Awareness Month, with May 31 observed as World No Tobacco Day in Palau. This proclamation represents a strong commitment by the Palauan government to raise awareness about the tobacco industry's efforts to undermine public health policies and to encourage citizens to participate in activities that promote the prevention and control of tobacco and nicotine use. This initiative aligns with Palau's broader goals of protecting public health and reducing the burden of tobacco-related harm in the country.

In addition, the President's proclamation was informed by crucial evidence gathered from the Tobacco Industry Interference Index. The Index provided data-driven insights into how the tobacco industry has sought to influence public policies, prompting the government to take decisive steps to counter these tactics. One such step is the development of a code of conduct aimed at protecting government officials from tobacco industry interference. This code will serve as a guide for officials, ensuring that they can engage in public health policy-making free from undue influence by the tobacco industry. Palau's proactive approach sets a strong example for other countries and reinforces the importance of transparency and integrity in tobacco control efforts.



VI

Improving Transparency Measures

Index to Track and Expose Unprecedented Numbers of Tobacco Lobbyists through US Transparency Laws



“The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index has significantly bolstered our advocacy efforts in the U.S. by improving transparency and accountability. Since August, our report page has drawn 1,715 views, with over 550 active users engaging with the content. We've trained 265 advocates, including 77 state and federal government representatives, on the 2023 Index. This education has empowered stakeholders to better understand and counteract tobacco industry interference in public health policy in the U.S.”

Nichelle Gray
Action on Smoking and Health - USA

The USA is one of the few countries in the world that requires a register for lobbyists, including from the tobacco industry, and make public all political donations and marketing expenditure as part of transparency for good governance. The US Index reported tobacco industry lobbyists are ubiquitous in state legislatures across the country. In total, tobacco companies, tobacco industry trade associations and tobacco retail stores registered at least 927 state-level lobbying registrations in 2023, involving 856 lobbyists or lobbying firms.¹⁹

According to Open Secrets, the tobacco industry made substantial contributions during the 2021-2022 election cycle. Federal members of Congress received a total of \$1,414,785 in contributions, while members of the Senate received \$400,301.²⁰ The financial might of the tobacco industry has greatly contributed to its ability to interfere in health policy over the years. In 2021, the Federal Trade Commission announced that U.S. marketing expenditures increased from USD \$7.84 billion in 2020 to \$8.06 billion in 2021.²¹ Marketing expenditures for smokeless tobacco products increased from \$567.3 million in 2020 to \$575.5 million in 2021.²² In 2021 and 2022 the companies focused more on the non-combustible market as they attempted to thwart increased government regulations of flavored tobacco products.

Czech Republic Takes First Steps in Transparency



The Czech Ministry of Health has urged other ministries to follow the example set by the Secretariat of the Government Council for Coordination of Addiction Policy, under the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, by publishing information about their communications with representatives of manufacturers, distributors, and promoters of addiction products. This move is a critical step toward ensuring transparency and implementing Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. The Secretariat's webpage, titled "Information on Meetings with Industry Representatives," is publicly accessible on their website at www.vlada.gov.cz.

“The findings of Czech Republic’s Index presented to the representatives of the relevant ministries have been well received. They are in favor of disclosing their interactions with the tobacco industry on their websites. This as a big step forward for us.”

Dr Kamila Zvolška
First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, Prague

VII

Determining Strong Tobacco Control Outcomes for CoPI0 Meetings

Brazil Index Launch Prepares Delegates Ahead of COP10 and MOP3 Sessions



October 16, 2023, ACT Brazil launched the 2023 Brazilian Tobacco Industry Interference Index at an event that brought together approximately 40 key stakeholders. The attendees included government officials, representatives from the Convention Secretariat of the WHO FCTC, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and various civil society organizations. This diverse group of delegates was also in Brasilia to participate in the preparatory meeting for the COP10 and Meeting of the Parties (MOP3), both critical gatherings focused on global tobacco control.

“By making these practices visible, the Index alerts the public, health organizations, and the government to the dangers of such interferences and helps us work more effectively in monitoring of the industry. This contributes to building a political environment more resistant to corporate pressure.”

Mariana Pinho
ACT Promoção da Saúde

The launch of the Index provided an opportunity to highlight the ongoing challenges posed by tobacco industry interference in Brazil, sparking discussions on strategies to strengthen national efforts in line with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. The presence of international bodies and civil society organizations underscored the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration in addressing these challenges ahead of the COP10 and MOP3 sessions.

The Ecuadorian Index Serves as Reference Supporting the Ecuador Government to Address Industry Interference and Advocate for Transparency at COP10



“The main obstacle to advancing tobacco control is the persistent interference of the tobacco industry and those who defend its interests, such as interference from non-health sectors and the use of litigation; as well as raising concerns about the increasing availability of emerging products in the markets, such as electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products.”

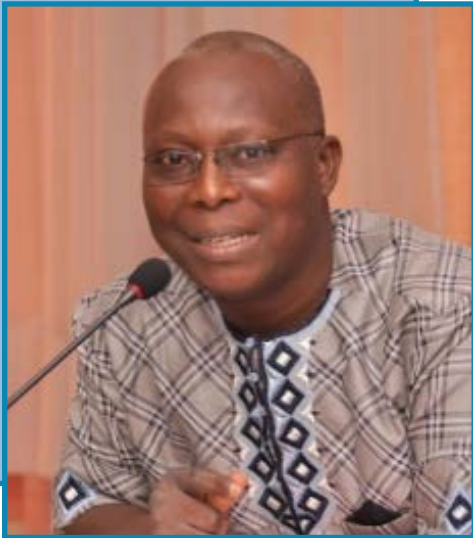
Daniel Dorado
Corporate Accountability

The Index served as a crucial document, highlighting the level of interference and motivating delegates from Ecuador attending the Conference of the Parties (COP) in February 2024, to make significant proposals, including leading the Americas regional statement on maximizing transparency.

The 3rd Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index for Latin America and the Caribbean Countries in 2023 served as a good reference for delegates from the region to the COP. Corporate Accountability, Global Alliance for Tobacco Control, Healthy Americas' Coalition and Action on Smoking and Health applauded the commitment of member states and the support of the Pan American Health Organization to develop a new strategy and plan of action to continue efforts to implement the most cost-effective tobacco control measures and to address the tobacco industry interference, which demonstrates the political will of member states and their commitment to advance the tobacco control agenda and related emerging issues in the Americas region.

At the national level, in July 2024, FESAR and Corporate Accountability held a meeting with the Undersecretary of Surveillance, Prevention and Health Control of the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador, and other government health control actors, and delivered copies of the Regional Index to coordinate joint actions. This was done during an event by the Ministry to launch the Tobacco Products Packaging Warning Rounds.

Africa Regional Index: Build Capacity of Africa Policymakers at Pre-COP10 Meeting



"With its important findings, the 2023 Africa Tobacco Industry Interference Index is a great advocacy tool that has enlightened African policymakers on the urgent need to put more efforts to protect their tobacco control legislation from the tobacco industry interference. We witnessed a great interest when it was presented at a special session during pre-COP10 meeting on 22 October in Entebbe to the WHO Afro Parties. We are pleased that it also caught the attention of policymakers from countries not in the survey yet."

Leonce Sessou
Africa Tobacco Control Alliance

Tobacco industry interference is the biggest challenge to tobacco control in Africa. According to the 2023 Regional Africa Index, Zambia, Tanzania, and Cameroon have the highest tobacco industry interference with Cameroon recording the worst performance, while Uganda, Ethiopia, and Botswana have the lowest rates of tobacco industry interference, with Botswana being the best-performing country.

In comparison with their 2021 scores, Burkina Faso, Botswana, and Ethiopia showed marked improvement, while, Cote d'Ivoire and Zambia marginally improved. Eight countries showed deterioration from their 2021 rankings with Kenya recording the highest level of deterioration.

According to Pr. Olalekan Ayo-Yusuf, Director of Africa Centre for Tobacco Industry Monitoring (ATIM), most of African countries have a smoking rate of less than 10% which means Africa does not need the tobacco industry-pushed harm reduction argument.

Eastern Mediterranean Region: The Index Draws Attention of Policymakers Across the Region

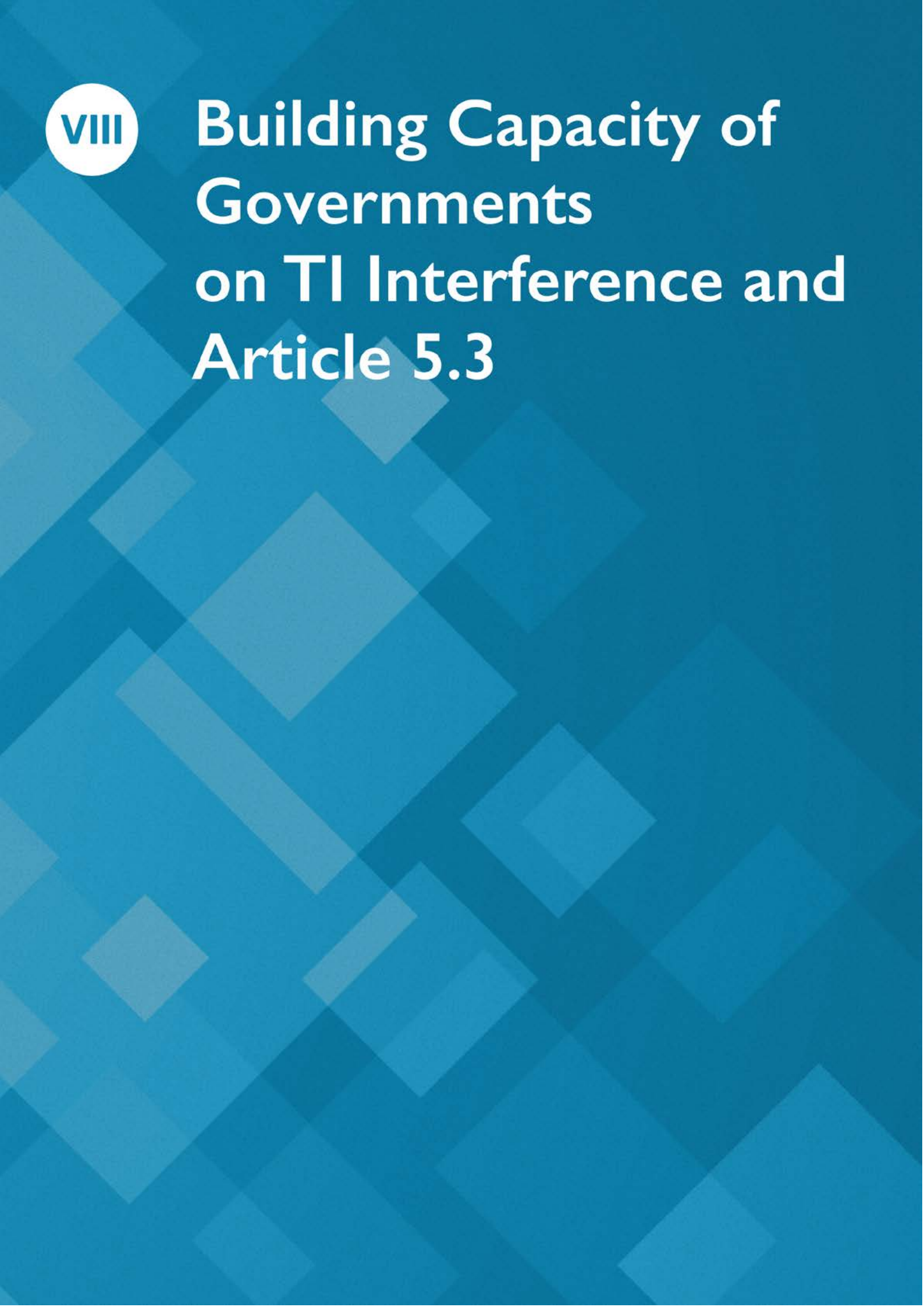


"The Index has been an eye-opener, reminding us to stay vigilant about the tobacco industry that is constantly lurking around us. The Index also summarizes how deeply the tobacco industry has infiltrated many governance centers, undermining efforts to keep the industry away from public health. We also use it during our interventions in the COP10 proceedings to support Article 5.3 efforts in countering tobacco industry interference in our work."

Dr Jawad Al-Lawati
Tobacco Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Oman

Looking back at the historical conduct of the tobacco industry in EMR countries as well as their current aggressive practices especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, it is clear that the industry has not changed much. Therefore, profiling their practices through the TI Interference Index is important and provides documentation and evidence that this industry is unlikely to change unless deterrents are introduced into tobacco control practices in EMR and Article 19 of the FCTC is implemented in full, to its maximum potential.

COP10 adopted a decision on "Implementation of Article 19 of the WHO FCTC: Liability" proposed by Oman, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, with 10 countries as co-sponsors. This decision calls on Parties to establish liability of the industry as a cross-cutting theme in tobacco control and a recurring agenda item for the COP.



VIII

Building Capacity of Governments on TI Interference and Article 5.3

Asian Index-Governments Must Fulfill their Mandate to Protect Public Health



“There is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry and public health interests. Governments must perform their mandate of protecting public health, and this includes protecting their bureaucracies from the undue and malicious meddling of the tobacco industry. The Asian Index shines the light on the tobacco industry’s tactics to block strong measures and sway governments towards providing industry friendly regulatory environments. Countries must remain vigilant and step up their efforts in combating industry interference.”

Dr Ulysses Dorotheo
Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance

Asia is failing to address the challenge of pervasive tobacco industry interference that is derailing and undermining health policies. This includes allowing the industry to participate directly in developing policy, accepting tobacco-related charity, granting benefits to the industry, and lacking transparency in interactions with the industry.²⁴ Despite the availability of strong tools and frameworks, such as the WHO FCTC, which empowers governments to protect public health from industry interference, many Asian governments are slow to implement these protective measures. This inaction poses a serious threat to the progress of tobacco control efforts and public health in the region, underscoring the urgent need for stronger political will and more decisive action.

The GTI was presented at WPRO capacity building workshop on Article 5.3 for 10 countries in Manila on April 19-20, and at the SEATCA’s ASEAN regional meeting on protecting youths from tobacco industry interference in Bangkok on August 14-15.

REFERENCES

1. Assunta M. Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023. Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC). Bangkok, Thailand. Nov 2023. Available at: <https://globaltobaccoindex.org/>
2. WHO FCTC Convention Secretariat. Information Note on classification of novel and emerging tobacco product. Geneva. 2019 Mar 15. Available from: <https://bit.ly/3HI71QE>
3. World Health Organization. Guidelines for Implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. 2008. Available at: https://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3.pdf
4. Assunta M, Reyes I. Harmful industry blowing smoke on human rights. Inter Press Service. Available at: <https://www.globalissues.org/news/2023/12/08/35514>
5. ATCA. Africa Tobacco Industry Interference Index. 2023. Available at: <https://atca-africa.org/africa-tobacco-industry-interference-index/>
6. Borneo Bulletin. Youth must stand against the tobacco industry: Minister. 31 May 2024. Available at: Youth must stand against the tobacco industry: Minister | Borneo Bulletin Online
7. RTBNews. World No Tobacco Day 2024. 31 May 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/h2fmayb3>
8. Azina Zin. Health Promotion Centre Launches Anti-Smoking Campaign. Health Promotion Centre. 31 May 2024. Available at: Health Promotion Centre launches Anti-Tobacco campaign - The Bruneian
9. RUKKI. Undermining health regulations in Indonesia: A Case study on safeguarding addictive substances in Health Law and draft Government Regulations. 2024. Available at: <https://rukki.org/undermining-health-regulations-in-indonesia-a-case-study-on-safeguarding-addictive-substances-in-health-law-and-draft-government-regulation/>
10. Janjua W. and Arif M. Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023: Pakistan's deteriorating score card. Pakistan Observer. 23 Dec 2023. Available at: <https://pakobserver.net/tobacco-industry-interference-index-2023-pakistans-deteriorating-score-card/>
11. Rob Davies. BAT subsidiary lobbies Pakistan to allow export of cigarettes to Sudan. The Guardian. 7 Jun 2024. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/jun/07/bat-subsiidiary-lobbies-pakistan-to-allow-export-of-cigarettes-to-sudan>
12. Sarfraz S. Delay in amending SRO results in blockage of major cigarette export order. Business Recorder. 20 Jul 2024. Available at: <https://www.brecorder.com/news/40313510>
13. The Spokesman. 3 Aug 2024
14. 19 Oct 2022. Available at: УКАЗ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА УКРАЇНИ №726/2022 — Офіційне інтернет-представництво Президента України (president.gov.ua)
15. EUREporter. PMI, acknowledged by Ukraine as a sponsor of the war continues to operate in Russia enjoy Ukrainian tax benefit. 22 Mar 2024. Available at: <https://www.eureporter.co/world/2024/03/22/pmi-acknowledged-by-ukraine-as-a-sponsor-of-the-war-continues-to-operate-in-russia-enjoy-ukrainian-tax-benefits/>
16. Assunta M., Reyes I. Harmful industry blowing smoke in human rights. Inter Press Service. 8 Dec 2023. Available at: <https://www.globalissues.org/news/2023/12/08/35514>
17. https://twitter.com/Salud_Ec/status/1752823938273407042
18. Raouf Alebshehy et al. UK 2023 Tobacco Industry Interference Index Policy Brief. Tobacco Control Research Group. University of Bath. 2024. Available at: <https://www.tobaccotactics.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/ukti-2023-policy-brief.pdf>
19. Action on Smoking on Smoking and Health. U.S. Tobacco Lobbyists and Lobbying Firm Registration Tracker. 2023. Accessed June 15, 2023. <https://ash.org/tobacco-money/>.
20. Money to Congress. 2022. February 13, 2023. <https://tinyurl.com/bz6muszd>.
21. <https://tinyurl.com/yc7aafy2>.
22. <https://tinyurl.com/yc7aafy2>.
23. Corporate Accountability. Latin America and Caribbean Tobacco Industry Interference Index. Available at: <https://globaltobaccoindex.org/regions/latin-america>
24. Reyes, Irene N. Asian Tobacco Industry Interference Index: Implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in Asian Countries. Nov 2023. Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA). Available at: AsianTII2023_Report.pdf (seatca.org)

