

Index for Tobacco Control Sustainability

NEPAL

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	P	5	5
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	A	5	0
14	Evaluation built into all major policy implementation plans	A	5	0
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	P	3	3
25	WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy across all ministries	P	3	3
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	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	91

Explanation of the scores:

- 1. Pre-requisite Indicator: >4 MPOWER policies in place:** As per the 2021 WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, Nepal fulfills three out of six MPOWER policies at the highest standard, including 90% Pictorial Health Warning, 100% smoke-free, and complete ban of TAPS.
- 2. National tobacco control budget (annual):** In Nepal, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) oversees the Health Tax Fund (HTF), which is dedicated to funding tobacco control initiatives. The Ministry of Finance allocates approximately NPR 40 crore to the HTF – approximately \$0.112 per capita – for this purpose.
- 3. National tobacco control law:** The Tobacco Product (Control and Regulation) Act 2010 is the primary law governing tobacco control in Nepal and regulates smoking in public places, workplaces and public transport; tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and tobacco packaging and labeling.
- 4. National budget allocation for tobacco control capacity building:** The National Health Education, Information and Communication Centre receives an annual budget from the government to conduct trainings and capacity building programs.
- 5. Tobacco taxation >75% of retail sales price:** Per the 2021 WHO Report, Nepal's average tobacco taxation of 27% on retail selling price is below the WHO-recommended level of >75%.
- 6. Tobacco taxation increases faster than inflation plus gross domestic product growth:** The growth rate of tax on tobacco products in Nepal is not commensurate with the rate of inflation.
- 7. National tobacco control unit:** Health Promotion & NCD and Tobacco Control Section function under the MoHP.
- 8. Civil society tobacco control network:** Action Nepal, NDRI, ReCHPec, Cancer Society Nepal, and Health Media have been actively working to advance tobacco control in Nepal.
- 9. Civil society representation in national tobacco control advisory committees:** There is representation of NGOs in the MoHP's Health Tax Fund Committee.
- 10. Health promotion fund for, or including, tobacco control:** The Health Tax Fund is dedicated for tobacco control in Nepal.
- 11. National policy against tobacco industry corporate social responsibility:** The 2014 National Tobacco Control Regulation prohibits the tobacco industry from promoting products through corporate social responsibility initiatives.
- 12. Tobacco-related mortality and morbidity recording system:** There is as yet no specific tobacco-related mortality and morbidity recording system in Nepal.
- 13. National evaluation framework in place:** There is no national evaluation framework for Tobacco control in place.
- 14. Evaluation built into all major policy implementation plans:** Evaluation has not been built into all major public policy implementation plans.
- 15. National tobacco control strategy:** The National Tobacco Control Strategic Plan and The National Anti-tobacco Communication Campaign Strategy for Nepal outline tobacco control goals and strategies to achieve optimal outcomes.
- 16. Tobacco control and noncommunicable diseases form part of national health policy:** Both tobacco control and noncommunicable disease reduction strategies and targets are formally included in Nepal's National Health Policy.

17. **Tobacco control forms part of national development plan:** The National Tobacco Control Strategic Plan was developed as part of implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
18. **Human resource for implementation (national):** There are dedicated staff for tobacco control at the MoHP.
19. **Global Tobacco Surveillance System surveys:** Nepal conducted various global tobacco surveillance system surveys, including global youth tobacco surveys in 2001, 2007, and 2011, and demographic and health surveys in 2006, 2011, and 2016, as well as STEP surveys in 2008 and 2019, to monitor tobacco burden and formulate strategies to combat the tobacco epidemic.
20. **Inter-governmental co-ordination mechanism:** According to the 2010 Tobacco Control Law, an intergovernmental coordination mechanism exists to ensure effective collaboration in implementing tobacco control measures. It includes representation from various ministries and civil society.
21. **Capacity building plan for tobacco control personnel:** The National Tobacco Control Strategic Plan includes a capacity building plan for tobacco control personnel.
22. **Developmental assistance funding includes tobacco control:** Several international organizations have been assisting the government of Nepal in advancing tobacco control.
23. **Code of conduct for government officials and staff:** The tobacco control laws specify a code of conduct for government officials to limit or prohibit direct and indirect interactions with the tobacco industry.
24. **Ministry of Health WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy:** The National Tobacco Control Regulation of 2014 serves to restrict interactions and prevent any influence from the tobacco industry.
25. **WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy across all ministries:** The National Tobacco Control Regulation of 2014 serves to restrict interactions and prevent any influence from the tobacco industry.
26. **Economic and social tobacco costs data:** The report on the Investment Case for Tobacco Control 2019 incorporates comprehensive data on both economic and social costs associated with tobacco use.
27. **National focal point post:** At the national level, there is a designated individual who serves as the focal point for tobacco control. This individual holds the position of chief of health promotion and Tobacco Control Section.
28. **National advisory committee:** The Health Tax Fund Committee acts as the national advisory committee for tobacco control in Nepal.
29. **Capacity building plans on research and evaluation:** There are no capacity building plans on research and evaluation in Nepal.
30. **Mass media campaigns funded:** One-tenth of the revenue from the Health Tax Fund is spent on mass media campaigns.
31. **Capacity building plan for personnel not specific to tobacco control:** There are no capacity building plans for non-tobacco-control-specific personnel in Nepal.

Main findings:

Progress in tobacco control sustainability since 2016

Nepal has exhibited a resolute dedication to enhancing tobacco control by implementing three out of six MPOWER policies at the highest level, including a 90% Pictorial Health Warning, 100% smoke-free environments, and a complete ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. In 2015, Nepal passed regulations to expand its pictorial health warnings to 90%, making it the first country to have the largest PHWs. However, the tobacco industry fought this measure, with Perfect Blend Pvt. Ltd. (supported by tobacco giant Surya Nepal Pvt. Ltd.) filing a petition in the Supreme Court opposing the government rules. After an eight-year legal battle by Action Nepal, on August 28, 2022, the Nepal Supreme Court ruled in favor of public health protection, mandating the tobacco industry to print 90% pictorial health warnings on all tobacco packs. This demonstrates the MoHP's determination to adopt this life-saving measure despite the industry's opposition and increase public awareness of the serious health risks of tobacco use and reduce consumption.

The Nepal government has allocated funding from tobacco excise taxes, with 25% of tobacco excise revenues directed to a Health Tax Fund managed and maintained by the MoHP. Additionally, a Health Hazard Tax is imposed on tobacco products to support tobacco control activities. The amount collected is spent on various tobacco control activities and programs, with approximately NPR 40 crore allocated to the Health Tax Fund by the Ministry of Finance. This is equivalent to US\$0.1120 per capita. Moreover, the National Health Education, Information, and Communication Center receives an annual budget from the government to conduct training and capacity building programs, reflecting Nepal's efforts to promote sustainable tobacco control initiatives.

Furthermore, in 2017, the MoHP issued the Public Notice on Rules for Sale and Distribution of Tobacco Products, requiring all retailers to obtain a specific retail license to sell tobacco products to eliminate the illicit trade of tobacco products, including smuggling, illicit manufacturing, and counterfeiting. These initiatives demonstrate Nepal's commitment to addressing public health concerns associated with tobacco use and are an encouraging sign for the future of tobacco control in the country.

Remaining gaps in tobacco control sustainability

In the 2022 assessment, Nepal attained a score of 91 out of 130. While the country has successfully implemented three out of six MPOWER policies at the highest level of achievement, a pressing need remains to fortify tobacco control laws and enhance their implementation. A number of priority interventions are urgently required, including the regular monitoring of tobacco use and prevention policies, an increase in tobacco taxation, and the provision of accessible smoking cessation programs.