
Jordan

**TOBACCO
INDUSTRY
INTERFERENCE
INDEX
2023**

Jordan

Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023

Results and Findings

	0	1	2	3	4	5
INDICATOR 1: Level of Industry Participation in Policy-Development						
1. The government ¹ accepts, supports or endorses any offer for assistance by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry or any entity or person working to further its interests. ² in setting or implementing public health policies in relation to tobacco control ³ (Rec 3.4)						5
<p>No changes to the score- The tobacco industry as a member of JSMO has participated in the e-liquid technical regulations meeting, gave comments, their amendments were endorsed, and voted on the technical regulations.</p> <p>The tobacco industry has met with the ministers of trade, industry (who also held the office of minister of labour and passed the café and restaurants regulations that allow serving waterpipe during COVID-19 pandemic), and the minister of finance to push for a pro-tobacco industry position of Jordan at the COP9.</p>						
2. The government accepts, supports or endorses <u>policies or legislation drafted</u> by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry. (Rec 3.4)						5
<p>No changes to the score- The lobby of the Jordan Restaurant Association (JRA) to the minister of tourism and minister of labour in 2021 resulted in an overturn of the directives issued by ministry of health on banning smoking and waterpipe in restaurants and cafes, with regulations from ministry of labour that gave them the ability to do so, following a decision from the prime minister using defence law. However, no legal challenges were done from the government or non-governmental agencies to try to mandate the government to challenge the labour ministry regulations that were contradictory to ministry of health directives.</p> <p>The participation of tobacco industry at JSMO tobacco committees and accepting their changes and contribution to the drafting of the law.</p>						
3. The government allows/invites the tobacco industry to sit in government interagency/ multi-sectoral committee/ advisory group body that sets public health policy. (Rec 4.8) I Never 5 Yes						5
<p>No changes to the score- tobacco industry is still present in the JSMO committee, and JRA is part of the tourism committee.</p>						
4. The government nominates or allows representatives from the tobacco industry (including State-owned) in the delegation to the COP or other subsidiary bodies or accepts their sponsorship for delegates.		1				

¹ The term “government” refers to any public official whether or not acting within the scope of authority as long as cloaked with such authority or holding out to another as having such authority

² The term, “tobacco industry” includes those representing its interests or working to further its interests, including the State-owned tobacco industry.

³ “Offer of assistance” may include draft legislation, technical input, recommendations, oversees study tour

	0	1	2	3	4	5
(i.e. COP 4 & 5, INB 4 5, WG) ⁴ (Rec 4.9 & 8.3) For non-COP year, follow the previous score of COP year.						
<p>No changes to the score- The government delegation to the COP or its related meetings do not have representatives of the tobacco industry. However, the tobacco industry were allowed to meet and lobby the ministers of trade and industry and minister of finance in pushing a strong pro-tobacco agenda, and send an official letter co-signed by the two ministers discussing the position of Jordan at COP9, and how Jordan should be more lenient to tobacco industry and how the industry is vital to the global economy. They particularly mention article 5.3 and call it non-binding.</p>						
INDICATOR 2: Industry CSR activities						
<p>5. A. Government agencies or their officials endorse, support, form partnerships with or participates in activities of the tobacco industry described as socially responsible. For example, environmental programs. (Rec 6.2)</p> <p>B. The government (its agencies and officials) receives CSR contributions⁵ (monetary or otherwise, including CSR contributions) from the tobacco industry or those working to further its interests during the pandemic. (Rec 6.4)</p> <p><i>NOTE: exclude enforcement activities as this is covered in another question</i></p>						5
<p>No changes to the score- Minister of agriculture participated in an event sponsored by JTI for environmental action and planting trees (day of the tree). Greater Amman Municipality supported and attended a series of workshops aimed to support children, women and youth in learning English, computer skills, and prepare them for high-school and university programs that was done through an astroturfing NGO sponsored by PMI in Naour.</p> <p>The previous Crown Prince, HE Prince Al-Hasan Bin Talal is the honorary president of the Jordanian-Japanese collaboration (name in English might be corrected), which JTI is a founding member of. The collaboration has many humanitarian components of work.</p>						
INDICATOR 3: Benefits to the Tobacco Industry						
6. The government accommodates requests from the tobacco industry for a longer time frame for implementation or postponement of tobacco control law. (e.g. 180 days is common for PHW, Tax increase can be implemented within 1 month) (Rec 7.1)						5
<p>No changes to the score- In an official letter read by the co-authors of this report, but could not upload a copy of due to the high-risk the person who showed us the document might incur, the document showed that the recent position of the Government of Jordan represented by ministry of trade and industry, and ministry of finance was alarming. In a co-signed letter, they sent a very pointed and serious toned letter to the minister of</p>						

⁴ Please annex a list since 2009 so that the respondent can quantify the frequency, <http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/en/>

⁵ political, social financial, educations, community, technical expertise or training to counter smuggling or any other forms of contributions

	0	1	2	3	4	5
health, the two ministers defended the tobacco industry, refused to accept the request of the ministry of health of increasing pictorial warnings to 75%, and change the pictorials periodically. The two ministers stated that this will incur financial losses to the tobacco industry and will require them to change their machines, delaying their production. The letter insinuated that the minister of health to keep silent and not deal with such matters and this could lead to political challenges. According to the whistleblower the ministry of health sent the original letter from the previous minister of health to JSMO. However, it was at JSMO where the letter was leaked to the tobacco industry, who then rallied the ministers of finance and trade and industry to issue the letter of concern to the new health minister who did not issue the previously referred letter, but to make sure he does not continue on the same trend the previous minister. Such a letter and such language were never documented or seen before by the authors of this report and it raised high concerns about the overall level of tobacco industry interference in Jordan. JSMO and JFDA give favorable outcomes to the tobacco industry in JSMO committee.						
7. The government gives privileges, incentives, tax exemptions or benefits to the tobacco industry (Rec 7.3)						5
<p>No changes to the score- BAT Jordan, announced a partnership with Regie, Lebanese state-owned tobacco enterprise, to manufacture tobacco products for export in 2022. This official launch of the partnership was announced in Jan 2023 under the patronage of the Minister of Industry and Trade and the Minister of Labor, in the presence of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Mrs. Dana Al-Zu'bi, Mr. Zaher Al-Qatarneh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Investment, Mr. Jamal Al-Saadi, representing the Director General of the Income and Sales Tax Department, and Mr. Mohammed Al-Jitan, Deputy Director of the Jordan Chamber of Industry.⁶</p> <p>JFDA allowed in direct contradiction to the public health law for an importer to import to Jordan a vape themed items with the logo of VGOD company on them. The customs department's letter sent to the MOH referred to the incident and requested for clear guidance on this issue.</p> <p>The government allowed new tobacco factories to operate in the tax-free zone. This will expand tobacco production in tax exempt areas after a long ban on allowing new factories.</p>						
INDICATOR 4: Forms of Unnecessary Interaction						
8. Top level government officials (such as President/ Prime Minister or Minister ⁷) meet with/ foster relations with the tobacco companies such as attending social functions and other events sponsored or organized by the tobacco companies or those furthering its interests. (Rec 2.1)						5
No changes to the score- As previously mentioned in points 2, 5, and 7, and as documented in the previous index reports, it is common for the prime minister, ministers						

⁶ Jordan News. BAT Jordan and Regie expand partnership to manufacture export quality products in Jordan 30 Jan 2023 <https://www.jordannews.io/Section-113/All/BAT-JORDAN-AND-REGIE-EXPAND-PARTNERSHIP-TO-MANUFACTURE-EXPORT-QUALITY-PRODUCTS-IN-JORDAN-26711>

⁷ Includes immediate members of the families of the high-level officials

	0	1	2	3	4	5
and parliamentarians to meet frequently with the tobacco industry and participate in tobacco industry sponsored events.						
9. The government accepts assistance/ offers of assistance from the tobacco industry on enforcement such as conducting raids on tobacco smuggling or enforcing smoke free policies or no sales to minors. (including monetary contribution for these activities) (Rec 4.3)						5
No changes to the score- the work on illicit trade protocol is still frozen and no new updates have emerged in the last two years. During our conversations with various officials, who said that the resistance is high and they don't expect Jordan to ratify the protocol in the near future. The tobacco industry has done so called campaigns to stop sales to minors with endorsement from the government.						
10. The government accepts, supports, endorses, or enters into partnerships or non-binding agreements with the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests. (Rec 3.1) <i>NOTE: This must not involve CSR, enforcement activity, or tobacco control policy development since these are already covered in the previous questions.</i>						5
No changes to the score- The companies owned by tobacco industry, or have shares in them, or their front groups are still active in renewable energy, tourism, and other sectors. Our recent information show that the third richest man is the head of Union Tobacco board of directors, whom holds high influence in Jordan and owns several large companies and investments.						
INDICATOR 5: Transparency						
11. The government does not publicly disclose meetings/ interactions with the tobacco industry in cases where such interactions are strictly necessary for regulation. (Rec 2.2)						5
No changes to the score- the ministries of trade, industry and finance did not disclose their meetings with the tobacco industry. JSMO and JFDA private meetings with the tobacco industry and private interactions are not disclosed.						
12. The government requires rules for the disclosure or registration of tobacco industry entities, affiliated organizations, and individuals acting on their behalf including lobbyists (Rec 5.3)				3		
No changes to the score- the legislations have not changed since previous reports.						
INDICATOR 6: Conflict of Interest						
13. The government does not prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns or to require full disclosure of such contributions. (Rec 4.11) / Never 5 Yes						5
No changes to the score- the legislations have not changed since previous reports.						
14. Retired senior government officials form part of the tobacco industry (former Prime Minister, Minister, Attorney General) (Rec 4.4)						4

	0	1	2	3	4	5
<p>Increased from 2 to 4 – A whistleblower contacted the authors and disclosed that the previous minister of trade, industry and supply is currently a consultant at PMI. This minister also was the head of JSMO and head of Jordan Enterprise Development Cooperation, both governmental agencies. His previous positions gave him clear insights of tobacco control legislations and public health policies. He was known to have pro-tobacco industry position as he promoted the tobacco industry in 2013 as part of the Jordanian Sudanese collaboration, supported the tobacco industry during the illicit trade tobacco production and was sited as one of the persons who enabled the illicit tobacco to progress. He still holds very high influence in Jordan, as he was one of the few economists the King and the Crown Prince of Jordan consulted in a video conference on the investment, economy and future direction of Jordan.</p> <p>Previous high-level diplomat working at the ministry of foreign affairs was hired as the government coordination and collaboration officer (exact title will be amended based on more eloquent translation) at PMI, who later became the communications director (same, title is longer) at the new vape company ANDS that Fadi Al Maitah (previous CEO of PMI Jordan) established in UAE and now has a branch in Jordan (as of 2022).</p>						
<p>15. <u>Current government officials</u> and relatives hold positions in the tobacco business including consultancy positions. (Rec 4.5, 4.8, 4.10)</p>						5
<p>No changes to the score- other than the previous evidence highlighted in the previous report, a present senator of Jordan Yaqoub Nassir Eddin (appointed in 2021) is known to have investments in waterpipe molasses manufacturing, tobacco trade, and owns a private university, and large number of companies. His company Yan industrial trading is known to trade tobacco products as disclosed in their MOTI records. The Jordan Alliance Against Tobacco and Smoking removed that university (who is a co-founder) from the alliance once they discovered the ties of the owner into tobacco industry back in 2019. The senator is a board member of the board of directors of orphan funds development cooperation who previously accepted donations from tobacco industry.</p>						
INDICATOR 7: Preventive Measures						
<p>16. The government has put in place a procedure for disclosing the records of the interaction (such as agenda, attendees, minutes and outcome) with the tobacco industry and its representatives. (Rec 5.1)</p>						4
<p>Increased from 3 to 4. After 3 years of commitment as part of the FCTC 2030 project, no such policies were implemented in Jordan, and no serious action was done to show true commitment to change. The previous draft done by MOH employees hasn't taken place on real ground and was put on the shelves. It was completely ignored by high-level officials from the government including the minister of health. Due to lack of any serious display of efforts, and the clear interactions between the government and the tobacco industry that the NGOs get a hold off due to the outcomes of the meetings rather than knowledge of the meeting itself and the meeting minutes, it was important to reevaluate the scoring of this item and demote the score from policy being developed to commitment to develop a policy. The draft made by MOH has not been used, discussed or improved in more than 5 years, which is no longer sufficient to give the government a lower point for actions no longer followed up on. However, since there is no clear indication of rejection of such commitment completely, the score of 4 was selected.</p>						
<p>17. The government has formulated, adopted or implemented a code of conduct for public officials, prescribing the standards with which they should comply in their dealings with the tobacco industry. (Rec 4.2); <i>1 for whole of government code; 2 for Yes but partial if only MOH</i></p>			2			

	0	1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in the score – The previous TIII reports highlighted that although there is no specific guide on interaction with the tobacco industry, the code of conducts of public servants require disclosure of tobacco industry ties (4, 5). However, this does not apply to the Parliament (4, 5). Additionally, the Minister of Health issued several decrees banning accepting gifts from the tobacco industry (4, 5). 						
<p>18. The government requires the tobacco industry to periodically submit information on tobacco production, manufacture, market share, marketing expenditures, revenues and any other activity, including lobbying, philanthropy, political contributions and all other activities. (5.2)</p>			2			
<p>The previous TIII reports highlighted that information regarding production, manufacturing, sales and other expenditures are documented in Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Trade (4, 5). However, they are not publicly disclosed (4, 5). This periodic assessment is done through MOH letters to the taxation department and customs asking for information to fill out the GTCR documents. However, in the recent file sent by the taxation department, they gave even more aggregated data with combination of cigarettes and molasses taxes being combined. This weakens the level of analysis expected to be done by the government.</p>						
<p>19. The government has a program / system/ plan to consistently⁸ raise awareness within its departments on policies relating to FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines. (Rec 1.1, 1.2)</p>					4	
<p>Score increased from 3 to 4. The previous commitment by the government of Jordan to develop such policies as part of the FCTC 2030 has not resulted in a program, system or concrete action plan to spread awareness about article 5.3 in the government. During the 3 years of the FCTC 2030 projects, only letters discussing the violations to article 5.3 were sent to JSMO, prime ministry and ministry of trade and industry were sent in 2019 and 2020. However, no actions were taken after that, and no programs were made. Additionally, the tobacco industry has lobbied the government of Jordan to believe that article 5.3 is non-binding and non-mandatory to implement (letters of MOTI and MOF in relation to COP 9). Since no concrete work was actually done, the scoring was corrected to 4, showing only commitment to change.</p>						
<p>20. The government has put in place a policy to disallow the acceptance of all forms of contributions/ gifts from the tobacco industry (monetary or otherwise) including offers of assistance, policy drafts, or study visit invitations given or offered to the government, its agencies, officials and their relatives. (3.4)</p>			2			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in the score – The previous TIII reports highlighted that the directive of the Minister of Health bans accepting gifts from tobacco industry, but is insufficient to cover all necessary aspects (4, 5). However, the draft of the tobacco control law does cover the remaining issues but has not moved forward since 2019 (4, 5). 						
TOTAL					82	

⁸ For purposes of this question, “consistently” means: a. Each time the FCTC is discussed, 5.3 is explained. AND b. Whenever the opportunity arises such when the tobacco industry intervention is discovered or reported.

Annex A: Sources of Information

	TOP TOBACCO COMPANIES	MARKET SHARE	BRANDS	SOURCE
1	Philip Morris Investments B. V. Jordan (PMJ), [PMI acquired of International Tobacco Cigarettes Company]			
2	Union Tobacco & Cigarette Industries Co. PLC (Jordan)		Vegas, Mikado, Affair, Rodeo, Gorgeous, Manhattan, Stallions, 5, Houston 2000, Miami	http://www.uniontobacco.com/
3	JT International Jordan Ltd			https://www.jti.com/middle-east/jordan
4	British American Tobacco Jordan			
5	Jordan Tobacco & Cigarette Co Ltd. (JTC)			

	MAIN NEWSPAPERS/ MEDIA	URL
1	Alghad	https://alghad.com/
2	Jordan Times	https://www.jordantimes.com/
3	Al- Anbat News	https://alanbatnews.net/
4	Al-Sabil	https://al-sabeel.net/
5	Ammon News	https://www.ammonnews.net/
6	Garaanews	https://garaanews.com/
7	Al- Wakeel News	https://www.alwakeelnews.com/

	TOBACCO INDUSTRY ALLIES/ FRONT GROUPS	TYPE (FRONT GROUP, AFFILIATE, INDIVIDUAL)	SOURCE
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			