

Bolivia



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

The national and municipal governments allow the tobacco industry (TI) to participate in economic recovery agendas, citing job creation and financial support. While there is no documented evidence of direct meetings between the TI and the State, implementation of Law 1280 on the Prevention and Control of Tobacco Product Consumption remains delayed and unregulated, more than five years after its enactment.

2. Industry CSR Activities

TI corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, often targeting issues linked to their own practices, are increasingly frequent and actively promoted. CSR activities involve state ministries (including the Ministry of Government and the Ministry of Environment and Water; specifically the Vice Ministry of Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation), foreign embassies (e.g., Japan), and NGOs. These initiatives include sustainability and environmental restoration programs, provision of drinking water to communities, donations to firefighters for wildfire response, and creation of sustainable employment opportunities. They illustrate alignment between the TI and the Bolivian State.

3. Benefits to the Industry

The Bolivian State, through its ministries and agencies, provides benefits to the TI. These include consumption studies claiming reductions in tobacco use, annulment of regulations, cancellation or reversal of seizures related to smuggling, facilitation of the opening of tobacco trading

companies, and negotiations to obstruct tax increases. The absence of regulation for Law 1280, alongside a lack of sanctions, continues to benefit the industry.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

State ministries, including the Ministry of Water, have received support from Japan Tobacco International (JTI) for drinking water projects. The Ministry of Productive Development has consulted with the TI in shaping its production plans, stating that tobacco and alcohol products are significant sources of revenue for the Department of Santa Cruz.

5. Transparency

There is no government policy requiring disclosure of the content or outcomes of meetings with the TI. This gap allows authorities to meet with industry representatives to agree to or promote public policy proposals, including the draft regulation for Law 1280.

The national government has no registry of the TI or lobbying groups. However, the National Institute of Statistics reports a 0.69% increase in cigarette sales in its CPI statistics.

6. Conflict of Interest

Former government officials now hold positions in the Confederation of Private Entrepreneurs of Bolivia, defending TI economic interests. Additional cases may exist but are difficult to verify, as many TI companies lack websites or social media presence, or restrict access for certain periods.



7. Preventive Measures

There are no specific regulations or procedures to ensure transparency of interactions with the TI. While official meetings are theoretically documented and sometimes published in newsletters, most records are not publicly available. General laws prohibit gifts of any kind, but there is no requirement for the TI to report expenditures on advertising, marketing, philanthropy, political contributions, CSR, or lobbying.

In this regulatory gap, the industry uses various marketing strategies, often through social media influencers, to expand its market presence. However, the Technical Secretariat of the Interinstitutional Committee for the implementation of Law 1280 is planning actions to operationalize and promote the law, including developing regulations on Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC with support from the Healthy Bolivia Foundation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adopt a specific regulation to govern and standardize interactions between public servants and the TI, explicitly prohibiting CSR activities.
2. Urgently disseminate guidelines on Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC to national, departmental, and municipal authorities, including the Technical Secretariat of the Interinstitutional Commission, as well as legislative, judicial, and electoral bodies.
3. Promote and advance the full implementation of Law No. 1280, ensuring the TI cannot delay its enforcement, and encourage the adoption of complementary municipal ordinances.
4. Amend Supreme Decree 4972 to include stronger control measures and sanctions for violations committed by the TI and related actors.
5. Share research findings widely with stakeholders at all levels to increase awareness of TI interference and strengthen support for tobacco control policies.