

Japan

Overall score:

88

I. Industry participation in policy development:

The existence of the Tobacco Business Act and the strong association between Japan Tobacco (JT), the Government (through 33% ownership) and policy makers, enables JT to participate in policy development which facilitates interference to weaken policies such as legislation on 100% smoke-free public places. However, in 2018, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, in consultation with experts from the public health community such as Haruo Ozaki, Chairman of Tokyo Medical Society successfully implemented the Passive Smoking Prevention Ordinance in Tokyo before the 2020 Olympics. The Japanese Government has followed through to make it a national law.

II. Tobacco industry-related CSR activities: JT conducts numerous tobacco-related CSR activities including sponsoring sports tournaments, games and cultural activities. The Tobacco and Salt Museum, which serves to promote various aspects of tobacco to the public, is partly owned by the government.

III. Benefits given to the tobacco industry: Allowing the tobacco industry to advertise, sponsor activities, and apply ineffective text-only warnings on cigarette packs, are all forms of benefits that the tobacco industry enjoys. The WHO FCTC is not effectively implemented, and this benefits the tobacco industry to continue promoting its business. JT and transnational tobacco companies such as Philip Morris International (PMI) are aggressively promoting heated tobacco products in mainstream media such as newspapers and magazines, as "new tobacco products with reduced harm". This is highly misleading to the public as these products are not harmless.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Tokyo Metropolitan government offer a subsidy scheme, "Passive Smoking Prevention Measure Subsidy System" to hotels, restaurants and local business to install smoking rooms. This is against Article 8 of the WHO FCTC that requires 100% smoke-free policy in public and workplaces. The subsidy scheme also benefits the tobacco industry.

International travellers are allowed to bring 200 cigarettes, or no more than 500 grams of smoking tobacco into Japan.

IV. Unnecessary interaction with the tobacco industry:

The tobacco industry has a close relationship with the Ministry of Finance which has fiduciary control over it, and the ruling political party, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

In 2017, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) awarded JT with the 'White 500' award for "making outstanding progress towards better health and productivity among their employees.

V. Procedure for transparency measures: Meetings between top level officials, such as Ministers, with the JT are not publicly disclosed. There is no register for private tobacco companies operating in Japan, such as PMI and BAT or their lawyers and consultants acting on their behalf.

VI. Avoiding conflicts of interest: There is no prohibition on contributions from the tobacco industry to political campaigns. High level officials, upon their retirement from government service, move to top leadership position in JT.

Dentsu Co., the top advertising company in Japan, manages JT's commercials and it promotes pro-tobacco industry messages on TV, newspapers and magazines. Their extensive presence in the media has reduced the coverage of messages on the harms of passive smoking.

VII. Preventive measures: There is no public record of effort by the government to regularly raise awareness on policies relating to FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines. The government has not put in place a procedure for disclosing records of interaction with the tobacco industry and its representatives. The government has not implemented a code of conduct for public officials, prescribing the standards they should comply in their dealings with the tobacco industry.



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Recommendations

1. The government must end all activities that promote the tobacco industry and take responsibility to promote the health and welfare of the people. The government must sever ties with the tobacco industry in order to be free to conduct public health activities.
2. The government must end all collaboration with JT's CSR activities and sponsored events;
3. The government must end benefits given to JT to promote the tobacco business such as the subsidy for smoking rooms, which violates FCTC Article 8 which requires all public and workplaces to be 100% smoke-free.
4. The Ministry of Finance must make transparent all interactions with the tobacco industry. The government must have a procedure for dealing with the tobacco industry.
5. The government must end the practice of "amakudari" (institutionalized practice of senior bureaucrats retiring to high-profile positions) as it negatively affects tobacco control policy and public health.