

Gabon



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

There is no direct evidence of tobacco industry (TI) involvement in the development of health policies reported between March 2023 and April 2025.

However, significant modifications were noted between the initial draft of the decree prepared by the Ministry of Health and the official text of Decree No. 001610/MCPMEPIAGR of December 30, 2024, setting conditions for the issuance, suspension, and withdrawal of licenses for tobacco product imports in Gabon. This suggests TI influence may have weakened the provisions of the decree.

Gabon does not include TI representatives in its delegation to the COP meetings.

2. Industry CSR Activities

Decree No. 0286/PR/MSPSSN of May 17, 2016, strictly prohibits corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities by the TI (Article 3.1). However, CECA GADIS has organized CSR activities attended and endorsed by high-level officials, including Ministers. These are clear violations of the law.

In June 2023, the Minister of Employment, Public Service and Labor, and the Deputy Director of Labor attended an ECSC-Gadis event and handed out "Safe Bets" Labor medals to 326 employees (gold, silver, and bronze medals for work, loyalty, and performance).

Also in 2023, the Minister of Trade visited the CECA-Gadis logistics base in Owendo to evaluate its supply strategy.

He endorsed the measures and stressed government commitment to support such initiatives to ensure food supply to the population.

Decree No. 0286/PR/MSPSSN of May 17, 2016, strictly prohibits CSR activities by the tobacco industry (Article 3.1), however, CECA GADIS has been organizing CSR activities which were attended and endorsed by high level officials such as Ministers. These are clear violations of the legal provisions.

In June 2023, the Minister of Employment, Public Service and Labor, and the Deputy Director of Labor, attended ECSC-Gadis event and handed out its "safe bets" Labour medals to 326 of its employees (gold, silver and bronze medals reward their work, loyalty, assiduity, and confidence).

Also in 2023, the Minister of Trade visited the Ceca-Gadis logistics base in Owendo to evaluate the strategy put in place to facilitate supply of fresh products and expressed his endorsement of the measures and stressed the government's commitment to support such initiatives to ensure the supply of the population.

3. Benefits to the Industry

In 2017, the government, with WHO support, agreed to implement a mixed taxation system on tobacco products: a 25% ad valorem tax and a specific tax of 300 FCFA per pack of cigarettes. This measure was included in the Finance Law starting in 2018.

As of April 2025, no change has been observed in the market. Officials in charge of tobacco control at the Ministry of Health, along with civil society representatives,

approached the Ministry of Economy. They were informed that implementation of the tax measures had been suspended by a memorandum from the Minister of Economy, citing TI complaints that the tax would suffocate their business.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

The Gabonese Tobacco Board (Régie Gabonaise de Tabacs), a government body responsible for governing the marketing of tobacco products, is still led by CECA GADIS, which represents TI interests.

5. Transparency

Decree No. 0286/PR/MSPSSN of May 17, 2016, on preventing TI interference in health policies, states in Article 5 that relations between the State and the TI must be governed by transparency. However, implementation of this principle remains unclear. According to the provisions of Decree No. 0286/PR/MSPSSN of May 17, 2016, on the prevention of tobacco industry interference in health policies in the Republic of Gabon, Article 5 stipulates that relations between the State and the tobacco industry must be governed by the principle of transparency. However, the implementation of this principle sometimes raises questions.

6. Conflict of Interest

Decree No. 0285/PR/MSPSSN of May 17, 2016, prohibits tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, including cultural or sporting event sponsorship. It is silent on contributions to political parties.

Until recently, the head of CECA GADIS also served as Advisor to the President of Gabon. He has since been removed from that role.

Interactions between public authorities and the TI are governed by Decree No. 0286/PR/MSPSSN of May 17, 2016. Article 5 states: "Relations between the State and the tobacco industry shall be governed by the principle of transparency." However, periodic submission of information on production, manufacturing, market share, marketing expenditure, revenues, lobbying, philanthropy, and political contributions is only partially required.

7. Preventive Measures

Although Gabon has Decree No. 0286/PR/MSPSSN of May 17, 2016, to address TI interference, it is not detailed enough to guide public officials and is not comprehensive. There is no code of conduct for officials on interactions and transparency obligations.

The Ministry of Health does not conduct systematic training to raise awareness of TI tactics and risks of interference among other departments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Gabonese Parliament should:
 - Dissociate the activities of the Gabonese Tobacco Board (RGT) from those of CECA GADIS and its allies.
 - Call on the Minister of Economy to enforce the fiscal measures outlined in the Finance Law.
2. The government, through the Ministry of Health, should:
 - Accelerate implementation of the legislative framework by adopting the decree to establish the national commission for tobacco control.
 - Raise awareness among other ministries (Trade, Interior, Education, Finance, and Customs) about the obligation to reduce tobacco use.
 - Strengthen implementation of Decree No. 0286/PR/MSPSSN of May 17, 2016, and adopt a Code of Conduct on Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC for all public officials.