



How monitoring the industry benefits surveillance and research under Article 20 of the WHO FCTC

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5th June 2025, Webinar: Monitoring tobacco industry interference – How to shine a light on tobacco companies' lobbying and influence on public health policy

Article 20 of the WHO FCTC

2. The Parties shall establish, as appropriate, **programmes for national, regional and global surveillance of the magnitude, patterns, determinants and consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke**. Towards this end, the Parties should integrate tobacco surveillance programmes into national, regional and global health surveillance programmes so that data are comparable and can be analysed at the regional and international levels, as appropriate.



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Declaration of Interests: None

Article 20 of the WHO FCTC

4. The Parties shall, subject to national law, **promote and facilitate the exchange of publicly available scientific, technical, socioeconomic, commercial and legal information, as well as information regarding practices of the tobacco industry** and the cultivation of tobacco, which is relevant to this Convention, and in so doing shall take into account and address the special needs of developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition. Each Party shall endeavour to:

...

c) cooperate with competent international organizations to progressively establish and maintain a global system to regularly collect and disseminate information on tobacco production, manufacture **and the activities of the tobacco industry which have an impact on the Convention or national tobacco control activities.**



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Benefits for Article 20 implementation

Supports policy evaluation

- If the industry actively seeks to circumvent, weaken or delay regulations, it can:
 - Undermine the impact of policy actions
 - Create a misleading picture of policy success

Monitoring helps to document factors that can affect policy impact



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Benefits for Article 20 implementation

Increases transparency

- Monitoring reveals industry's influencing methods, such as:
 - Lobbying, statements, front groups
 - Funding research and manipulating information

Authorities and researchers are better able to assess the independence of decision-making



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Benefits for Article 20 implementation

Early warning system

- Monitoring can expose upcoming products, marketing tactics, and attempts to circumvent legislation

Authorities are prepared to update regulations and researchers to include new products in epidemiological surveillance systems



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Benefits for Article 20 implementation

Increased awareness

- Decision-makers, civil society and media can be more interested in following the trends, policy evaluation and other research findings; and advocating for new measures and resources

Strengthened national surveillance and evidence-based decision-making



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Key takeaways

- Exchange of information on tobacco industry practices is **part of Article 20 implementation**
- National monitoring of the industry interference **supports surveillance, research, policymaking and policy evaluation** in several ways
- General resources to strengthen Article 20 implementation:
<https://extranet.who.int/fctcapps/fctcapps/fctc/kh/surveillance>



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