

Tobacco Control Asia Pacific Monthly Bulletin

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Highlights

Indonesia Adopts Code of Conduct to Prevent Tobacco Industry Interference

To strengthen tobacco control governance and protect public health policies from industry influence, the Code of Conduct for Subnational Civil Servants on Tobacco Control has been formally endorsed and signed by the Vice Minister of Home Affairs.

The Code establishes clear ethical standards for government officials, emphasizing that civil servants are protectors of public health and must avoid any engagement with the tobacco industry that could compromise policy integrity or create a perception of partnership. It explicitly prohibits officials from holding informal meetings, accepting gifts, sponsorships, or donations, and mandates that any official meetings must include at least two government representatives with full documentation.

This initiative ensures that no organization or individual with commercial or vested interests in the tobacco industry participates in developing or implementing public health and tobacco control policies.

The Code of Conduct will be officially launched and socialized during the national ADINKES workshop in Surakarta on October 21, 2025, which will gather approximately 500 subnational officers. The Ministry of Home Affairs will also issue a circular letter to local governments to reinforce compliance.

By institutionalizing this Code, Indonesia takes an important step toward preventing tobacco industry interference in policy development and implementation and denormalizing government–industry interactions at the subnational level.



Code of Conduct document endorsed and signed by the Vice Minister of Home Affairs

Protecting people from tobacco smoke

Indonesia: As of September, 383 of 514 cities in Indonesia have adopted 100% smoke-free policies, 40 cities have implemented outdoor TAPS bans, and 32 have banned tobacco product displays at points of sale. In September, Tasikmalaya City adopted a ban on smoking in all public places, workplaces, and public transport.

From July to September, six enforcement cities focused on capacity building, public awareness, and coordination. A total of 580 venues were inspected, 690 youth participated in awareness campaigns, and 139 government officials were trained on smoke-free implementation.

Vital Strategies, in collaboration with MTCC University Muhammadiyah Magelang, met with H. Damar Prastyono, Mayor of Magelang City, to discuss the implementation of the Smoke-free area (KTR) regional regulation. The mayor expressed his commitment to issuing a mayoral circular to enforce KTR in seven designated areas and to gradually phase out tobacco advertising in the city.



Meeting with Mayor of Magelang City



Meeting with Mayor of Makassar

On October 1, 2025, Mayor Munafri Arifuddin of Makassar met with senior city officials to discuss strengthening tobacco control, focusing on enforcing smoke-free policies and a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS). Prof. Ridwan Amiruddin, Director of Hasanuddin CONTACT, emphasized the urgent need to protect children from tobacco promotion and highlighted that banning ads does not harm local revenue. The Mayor expressed strong support, directing the Health Office and the Smoke-Free Task Force to ensure no smoking signage installation, consistent enforcement, and banning all forms of TAPS.

- On October 6, 2025, Smokefree Jakarta, together with other civil society groups under the Jakarta Health Coalition, held a peaceful rally in front of the Jakarta Parliament building to support the city's Smoke-Free Local Regulation. About 120 participants from organizations including Smokefree Jakarta, the Muhammadiyah Students Association, and Muhammadiyah University attended. The Coalition urged the Special Committee to maintain three key provisions: a total smoking ban in smoke-free areas (including indoor smoking rooms), a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS), and a ban on tobacco product displays at points of sale. A delegation met with Farah Savira (Chair) and Abdurrahman Suhaimi (Vice Chair) of the Committee, submitting a formal letter of support. The Committee confirmed that key public health provisions remain in the draft, expected to be submitted to Bapemperda this week, while the Coalition will continue monitoring



Rally in front of Jakarta Parliament building to support local smoke-free regulation



Meeting with Chairperson and Vice Chairman of the KTR Special Committee

- Cambodia:** In September and October 2025, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, and Kep Provinces were officially recognized as Smoke-Free Tourist Cities by the Ministry of Tourism. The recognition honors cities, districts, and municipalities that have successfully implemented smoke-free environments within the tourism sector. All three recognition ceremonies were officiated by H.E. Huot Hak, Minister of Tourism. The awards were endorsed by the Asia-Pacific Smoke-Free Cities Network, the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), and the World Health Organization (WHO), marking another milestone in Cambodia's ongoing efforts to promote smoke-free tourism.



Minister of Tourism awarded Smoke-Free Tourism Cities awards to Governors of Kampong Speu (Left) , Kep (Middle) and Kampong Thom (Right) Provinces

- **Philippines:** The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Ateneo School of Government (ASOG) participated in the Department of Health (DOH) National Technical Working Group meeting to review and refine the draft Smoke-Free Local Ordinance Template, incorporating stakeholder feedback to ensure alignment with WHO FCTC provisions and strengthen enforceability at the local government level.
- Data & Implementation Sciences for Health (DISH) supported South Cotabato in finalizing its Provincial Tobacco Control Network and Anti-Smoking/Anti-Vaping Ordinance, and provided technical assistance to the Koronadal and T'Boli local government units in advancing their implementing rules and regulations (IRR).
- Transcend provided technical assistance to the Ifugao Provincial Board, facilitating the drafting of a Provincial Smoke-Free Ordinance, and supported Kalinga and Iloilo provinces in their Regional Tobacco Control Network meetings.

MMDA conducted a Training of Trainers (TOT) for the enforcement of Local Ordinances on Smoke- and Vape-Free Environments, with support from Vital Strategies in Pateros, Pasig, and Mandaluyong. Following the TOT, post-TOT enforcer orientation and training were conducted in the respective LGUs using the provided curriculum.



ToT for smoke-free enforcers in Pateros City

Offering help to quit tobacco use

- **Cambodia:** The National Centre for Health Promotion (NCHP), relevant Ministry of Health departments, the World Health Organization in Cambodia, and the Cambodia Movement for Health held a meeting to finalize the tobacco cessation guideline for primary health care.
- **Philippines:** Vital Strategies and its grantees participated in the Strategic Action Planning Workshop organized by the Department of Health (DOH) on September 23–24, which refined the draft National Tobacco Cessation Infrastructure Plan 2030 and positioned tobacco cessation as a key component of the National Tobacco Prevention and Control Strategy 2030.
- ASOG initiated data collection for the study on tobacco cessation outcomes using the STEPS-TC tool, complemented by key informant interviews with the DOH and local government units.

Warning about the dangers of tobacco



Public Discussion on standardized packaging and PHWs

Indonesia: On 24 September, Vital Strategies' grantee Tobacco Control Support Centre held a public discussion with speakers from the Ministry of Health, to build support for standardized packaging and pictorial health warnings (PHWs) and accelerate their adoption in Indonesia.

- Nepal:** Action Nepal, in collaboration with the Forum for Protection of Consumer Rights–Nepal, organized a stakeholder workshop to discuss the ongoing Supreme Court case on the Directive for Printing and Labelling of Warning Messages and Pictures on Tobacco Product Packaging 2025. The Forum for Protection of Consumer Rights–Nepal, which is leading the legal battle, shared updates and strategies following the loss of all related legal documents after the Supreme Court building was set on fire during recent political unrest. Officials from the Ministry of Health and Population, NHEICC, media, and civil society participated in the discussion. The meeting highlighted the need to mobilize mass media to raise public awareness, strengthen enforcement of existing tobacco control laws, and counter industry interference. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to coordinated advocacy and vigilance to ensure strong tobacco regulation in Nepal.



Workshop on sharing updates and strategies for the 2025 Supreme Court case on tobacco packaging warning directives

Enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship

- **Indonesia:** Vital Strategies' grantee Muhammadiyah Student Association engaged their national network to distribute a TAPS ban policy brief across Indonesia. By September, it had reached 7 ministries, 13 provinces, 35 cities, and 350 villages. This month, they met with the Governor of West Sumatera to gain his commitments on comprehensive ban of tobacco advertising in the province.

Bangladesh: On 12 August 2025, the AID Foundation met with the Dhamrai, Municipality representatives to discuss the implementation of Local Government Institution (LGI) guidelines on tobacco control. At the meeting, the AID Foundation presented a baseline survey report that identified tobacco shops and illegal advertisements in the municipality. In response, the Municipality announced that it would initiate a licensing process for tobacco shops and conduct mobile courts to remove illegal advertisements, based on the survey findings. Officials from the Municipality, the AID Foundation, and the local organization SASE were present at the meeting.



Meeting with Dhamrai, Municipality representatives



Bilateral meeting with the Savar Municipality representative

The AID Foundation held a bilateral meeting with the Savar Municipality to discuss next steps following the recently completed baseline survey on tobacco control. During the meeting, the Municipality announced that it would introduce a licensing process for tobacco shops based on the survey findings. Representing the AID Foundation, the Project Director and Senior Program Officer attended the discussion, reaffirming the organization's commitment to supporting effective implementation of tobacco control guidelines at the local level.

- On 30 July, a mobile court conducted an operation against illegal tobacco sales near educational institutions in Jhenaidah. The drive covered areas around Jhenaidah Collectorate School and College, Poura Model School and College, the municipality, and Sonali Bank, targeting sales within 100 meters of schools and unlawful tobacco advertisements. Five shops were fined a total of BDT 1,500, and one tobacco outlet was sealed for violations. Representatives from the AID Foundation and Padma Social Welfare Organization were present during the drive.

Raising taxes on tobacco

- **Indonesia:** Vital Strategies' grantee Ahmad Dahlan University held a meeting with the head of the Sub-directorate of Technical and Excise Facilities under the Directorate General of Customs and Excise, Ministry of Finance, to discuss strategies for increasing tobacco taxes. Fifteen civil society organizations also sent letters to the Minister of Finance supporting higher tobacco taxes.

Tobacco industry interferences

- **Cambodia:** In June 2025, the Ministry of Health (MOH) questioned the tobacco industry's unverified claim that illicit cigarettes made up 30% of the market. Despite failing to provide evidence at that time, the Association of Tobacco Industry of Cambodia (ATIC) has now inflated the figure to 49.3%—nearly half of all cigarettes. This estimate is almost three times higher than the studies by the Royal Academy of Cambodia and WHO, which reported illicit trade at 15% and 18% respectively. ATIC's report also reveals that it was funded and reviewed by tobacco companies—including BAT, IMB, JTI, Next Generation Distribution, PMI, and Viniton—highlighting a clear conflict of interest and a deliberate attempt to distort evidence to undermine stronger health regulations.

General Tobacco Control

- **Philippines:** In The Association of Department of Health Retired Employees (ADOHRE) organized a Civil Society Consultative Workshop on the Open Government Partnership (OGP) NCD Commitment to develop an implementation roadmap that integrates transparency, accountability, and citizen participation into national NCD and tobacco control programs.
- MMDA, together with Vital Strategies and partner organizations, conducted a Training of Trainers (TOT) for the MPOWER course, attended by Tobacco Control Program Coordinators and Task Force members from 13 Metropolitan Manila LGUs.

Indonesia: Vital Strategies' grantee, Udayana Central, is supporting policy development and implementation in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) and East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Provinces. Cross-sectoral coordination workshops were held in Mataram (NTB) in August and September, and in Kupang (NTT) on 24 September 2025. The Mataram meeting was attended by the Governor's Assistant III, while the Kupang meeting was attended by the Governor of NTT along with representatives from various sectors. These workshops aimed to assess the current situation, identify key promoters and barriers, and translate findings into strategies and activities to strengthen tobacco control. To support this process, we also provided the NTB Provincial Health Office with an example of an academic paper and a Perda (local regulation) template.



Cross-sectoral coordination workshops by Udayana Central

- Bangladesh:** On 31 July 2025, the Central Monitoring Team held its Inter-Ministerial Meeting on implementing the Guidelines for Tobacco Control Activities in Local Government Institutions, chaired by Mr. Md. Mahmudul Hasan, NDC, Director General, Local Government Division. The meeting, moderated by Ms. Ashfiqun Nahar, Deputy Secretary, included a presentation by Ms. Shagufta Sultana, Project Director of AID Foundation. Members agreed to form two sub-committees: one to revise the existing guidelines and another to draft Guidelines for the Model Municipality.



Demonstration in front of the National Parliament demanding to strengthen the Tobacco Control Law

Under the leadership of the AID Foundation, anti-tobacco organizations including the Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA), WBB Trust, DASA, TCRC, NATAB, and ARK Foundation organized a human chain and demonstration in front of the National Parliament, raising an eight-point demand to strengthen the Tobacco Control Law. Their demands call for a complete ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship, and CSR; 100% smoke-free public places and transport; restrictions on sales near schools, hospitals, and playgrounds; standardized packaging; prohibition of single-stick sales and e-cigarettes; 90% pictorial health warnings; and a ban on tobacco promotion in entertainment and digital media, with the goal of reducing tobacco-related diseases, protecting public health, curbing NCDs, and increasing government revenue.



Youths participating in the rally in front of Jakarta Parliament building to support local smoke-free regulation

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