

Tobacco Taxation Factsheet: Guinea-Bissau



Population: 1.87 million

Country income classification: Low-income

Regional economic affiliations: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)

Sources: World Bank Population Totals, 2018 and World Bank Country and Lending Groups, 2019.

Tobacco use causes more than 8 million deaths globally each year, with more than 80% of the world's smokers living in low- and middle-income countries. The cost of tobacco in West Africa, both in terms of the negative impact on public health and the economy, will continue to grow if governments do not take decisive action to limit its use. Increasing tobacco excise taxation is the most effective way to reduce tobacco consumption and improve health outcomes, while also raising government revenues. This factsheet examines the case for increasing tobacco taxation in Guinea-Bissau.

Source: World Health Organization Tobacco Factsheet, 2019.

Smoking in Guinea-Bissau: The Facts

Smoking prevalence



Among adults (aged 15 and over)



Among youth (aged 13–15)

Source: WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2019.

Attributable deaths



More than
900 deaths
each year from
tobacco-related illnesses

Source: Tobacco Atlas, 2018.

Cost to society



\$4 million
each year, international \$ PPP

This includes the direct cost of healthcare, as well as loss of productivity due to mortality and morbidity resulting from tobacco use.

Source: Goodchild, Nargis and d'Espaignet, 2018.

Note: International purchasing power parity (PPP) is a currency conversion method that accounts for differences in purchasing power and cost of living across countries.

Affordability

The price of a pack of cigarettes cannot be considered in isolation. Affordability measures the price of cigarettes relative to income. For example, if incomes increase faster than cigarette prices, then cigarettes are becoming more affordable. From 2008 to 2018, cigarette affordability remained unchanged in Guinea-Bissau. To have a positive public health impact, cigarettes should become less affordable over time.

Source: WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2019.



Price of a pack of cigarettes

	Local currency	International \$ PPP
Guinea-Bissau	XOF 500	\$2.07
South Africa	ZAR 37.34	\$6.01
United Kingdom	GBP 9.40	\$11.98

Source: WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2019.

Note: All prices are for a pack of the most sold brand in each country in 2018. International purchasing power parity (PPP) is a currency conversion method that accounts for differences in purchasing power and cost of living across countries.

Tobacco Taxation in Guinea-Bissau

The total excise tax on tobacco products in Guinea-Bissau accounts for only 3.5% of the average retail price. This is far below the 70% benchmark set by the World Health Organization (WHO).

There are three main reasons why the total excise tax burden is so low. Firstly, Guinea-Bissau's ad valorem tax on tobacco products of 45% is below the minimum 50% rate set by the ECOWAS tobacco tax directive. Secondly, the ad valorem tax is levied on the import value/producer price, which is generally very low compared to the retail price. Therefore, any increases in the ad valorem rate will have a very small impact on the total tax charged.

Thirdly, Guinea-Bissau does not currently levy a specific tax on tobacco products, even though this is required by the ECOWAS directive. Although a specific tax was proposed in 2015, the date when this will be implemented is unknown. A specific tax (per cigarette or kilogram of tobacco) is proven to be straightforward to implement and highly effective in increasing the total excise tax burden.

Ad valorem tax

Rate charged on import value/
producer price

45%

50%

ECOWAS directive

Specific tax

Amount charged per cigarette

USD 0.00

USD 0.02

ECOWAS directive



Total excise tax as a % of retail price

3.5%

70%

WHO benchmark

Source: WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2019

Note: All figures relate to the 2018 tax structure.

Recommendations

To increase the price of tobacco products – and therefore decrease tobacco consumption and the associated costs to society – the Government of Guinea-Bissau should:

- **Promptly implement the new specific tax** that has been proposed.
- **Increase the specific tax** to at least 0.02 USD per cigarette and 20.00 USD per kilogram of other tobacco products, as directed by ECOWAS.
- **Raise the specific tax rate** at least once each year, to keep pace with increases in inflation and income.
- **Levy the ad valorem tax on the retail price** of tobacco products, rather than the import value/producer price.
- **Consider investing additional tax revenue raised in tobacco control** and other public health initiatives.

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