

# A CALL FOR OPEN ACCESS DATA ON TOBACCO TAXATION



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## The Impact of Tobacco Consumption



- Tobacco consumption accounts for more than 8 million deaths annually, of which 1.2 million are attributable to second-hand smoking.<sup>1</sup>
- It also affects household expenditure by shifting expenditure from necessities like food and education to tobacco expenditure.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Cigarette butts are the leading plastic polluters, with an estimated two-thirds of the trillions of filters used each year tossed into the environments, which inhibit plant growth and affect marine life.<sup>4,5</sup>

## Reliable Tobacco Tax Data Sources



- There is a misconception that tobacco tax data is non-existent but such data are routinely collected by governments.
- The Ministries of Finance and Customs Units are reliable data sources for excise tax revenue, tobacco import duties, general sales tax (GST) and value added tax (VAT) data.
- Policymakers should consider opening access to their data to ensure evidence-based research on tobacco taxation takes place.

## Why is Tobacco Taxation Data Important?



- **Effective tobacco taxes** significantly reduce tobacco consumption while simultaneously generating government revenue and curbing the public health effects of tobacco use.
- However, some governments are still reluctant to raise tobacco excise taxes as a result of the tobacco industry's misleading claims that tobacco tax hikes lead to increased illicit cigarette trade.
- This creates a demand for evidence-based research on the advantages of tobacco taxation and its effects on illicit trade.
- Such evidence will motivate governments to implement tobacco tax increases.
- Sound research requires **reliable data**, which in turn drives a demand for tobacco taxation data.

## Data Access and Data Quality



- Tobacco data are sometimes available through commercial "data brokers".
- It is difficult to confirm the quality of commercially produced datasets, as access-restrictions hinder data scrutiny by the wider academic community.
- Open access data allows for data quality assessments.
- In order to promote **sound research** in tobacco taxation, we need to promote open access data.

## Tobacco Tax Data for Research



- Researchers are often interested in tobacco tax data disaggregated by brands, time period (e.g. monthly or annually) and tobacco product (e.g. cigarettes, cigarillos).
- Such data should be available as **open access** to promote research.

## Open Access Data Promotes Research



- The [Data on Aliments, Tobacco and Alcohol \(DATA\) in Africa Project](#) provides open access to economic data on alcohol, food, and tobacco for African countries.
- Researchers can either access data on the DATA portal or learn about where they can access data shared on other sites.
- Opening access to data as the DATA Project does, is a primary tool for promoting evidence-based research on tobacco taxes.
- Promoting evidence-based research on the benefits of tobacco taxation creates the gateway necessary for tobacco tax policy changes.
- Data owners should open access to their data to promote country-specific tobacco tax research.

Sources:  
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