

Road map, timelines and steps to conduct evidence-based research (Articles 6.5 and 13.2)

This document relates to item 5.2 of the provisional MOP agenda and corresponds to documents [FCTC/MOP/3/6](#)

Third session of the Meeting of the Parties to The Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products,
12-15 February 2024, Panama City, Panama

Key messages

- GATC welcomes the report by the Convention Secretariat on the proposed roadmap and agrees with the research-related conclusions presented by the Secretariat in the report, namely that the existing literature base has a number of gaps, and that future research is needed to address these.
- GATC supports the report's consideration of the Secretariat potentially working with international partners and selected experts to define a common methodology to estimate illicit trade in tobacco products.
- The financing for the roadmap and timeline will come from extra-budgetary funding yet to be sought or received and not from the assessed contributions. Extra-budgetary funding for the Protocol has been limited over the last 5 years and there is a risk that the planned research will not be conducted and that the timeline will not be met if this revenue stream is the only means of support for the roadmap. GATC believes that there are only two options for the financing which would provide adequate stability for the roadmap to be carried out as planned: either through assessed contributions or extra-budgetary funding which needs to be committed as soon as possible.

Key recommendations

- Given the tobacco industry's extensive funding of research relating to the illicit tobacco trade and its reliance on third party networks to obscure the industry's influence over the data, it is important that any consultants engaged in the research are sufficiently vetted to ensure their independence.

What is being proposed

Document FCTC/MOP/3/6 presents the draft road map for 2024 – 2025 to conduct evidence-based research in accordance with articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

In the draft decision Parties are invited to:

- Adopt the road map to conduct evidence-based research in accordance with Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, contained in Annex 1 of document FCTC/MOP/3/6

Request the Convention Secretariat to:

- Actively seek and receive Extra-budgetary Contributions from Parties and other international donors, including competent international and regional intergovernmental organizations and financial and development institutions, for the implementation of the road map and report

on the outcomes on implementation of the road map to the Fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Background and why this is important

The MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP1(7) emphasizing that the Protocol requires that the MOP, five years after entry into force of the Protocol, ensure that evidence-based research is conducted according to Article 6.5 and Article 13.2 of the Protocol. In the decision, the MOP requested the Convention Secretariat: (a) to identify research needs and gaps relevant to Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol; and (b) to present, at the Second session of the MOP, a detailed road map setting out the timelines and steps to conduct evidence-based research foreseen by Article 6.5 and Article 13.2, fully respecting Article 4.2 of the Protocol and Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

Existing research on the subjects of key inputs and duty free sales appears insufficient to support an informed discussion on the implementation of Articles 6.5 and 13.2. Data availability and methodological aspects in the estimation of the size and nature of illicit trade in tobacco products have been identified as key challenges towards conducting research on the subjects of key inputs and duty free sales. There is however relevant existing research and evidence-based methodologies and Parties require more opportunities to learn about them from vetted experts to utilize them effectively.