

MOP2 BULLETIN

TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2021



FEEL LIKE THINGS ARE MOVING FAST? YOU ARE NOT ALONE

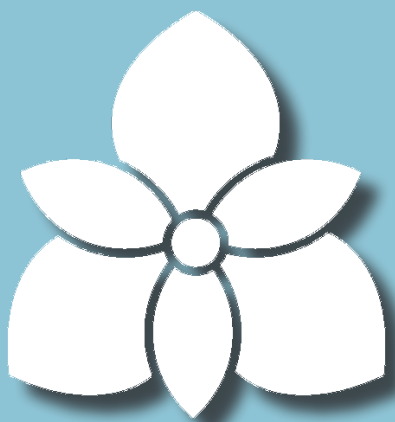
Any delegate in Committee A who stepped out to grab a quick cup of coffee may have felt like they missed the entire session on day one, when in reality, only a short amount of time had gone by. Decisions in Committee A were adopted in record time, often with little discussion and not much time to address the technical and sometimes complicated issues that come with the Protocol.

Within the first hour, both reports of the Working Groups (one on tracking and tracing, and the other on assistance and cooperation) were adopted and we were moving on to discuss the proposed implementation assistance strategy. MOP doesn't have to rush into decisions without ensuring full participation of all Parties; we still have three out of four days remaining until the closure of MOP2. Holding technical discussions in a virtual setting doesn't make the task easier, but we still need to approach negotiations with a spirit of collaboration and ensure we pave the way for the Protocol to be successful. We will likely see the implementation assistance strategy adopted early on day two which means that Committee A will have completed its work for MOP2. Of course, if adopted, it represents the start of a significant amount of work that will need to be done after MOP2 to roll-out this strategy.

In order to turn these technical matters and implementation plans into action, MOP needs to be properly funded. Committee B supported a critical step towards a well-funded MOP on November 15 by endorsing the Secretariat's proposal to establish an Investment Fund. That's a big deal: once it's up and running, we will have a third source of revenue that is projected to earn US\$1-million annually. The resulting addition of US\$2-million each biennium would make up roughly 22% of the proposed budget for the upcoming biennium. Parties should take a moment to celebrate this important achievement and we in particular, would like to applaud Parties from the region of the Americas for their leadership on proposing to include NGO observers on the oversight committee.

Note that the Investment Fund would create a third revenue source and Parties cannot forget about the importance of both Assessed Contributions and Extrabudgetary Funding. The Protocol is still relatively new and MOP2 marks a key moment of growth. Adequate funding is required to facilitate growth and many low- and middle-income Parties need additional financial and technical assistance in order to promote implementation. One third of the 64 Parties that have ratified the Protocol don't have the financial resources required to implement the Protocol, and the pandemic has contributed to deepening this funding gap. The provision of such assistance for low- and middle-income Parties via the MOP activities budget should be seen as a net benefit for all Parties to the Protocol.

Discussions at MOP2 are far from over – let's devote our time on day 2 to securing an implementation strategy fit for all Parties and securing the funding to make it work.



ORCHID AWARD



DIRTY ASHTRAY

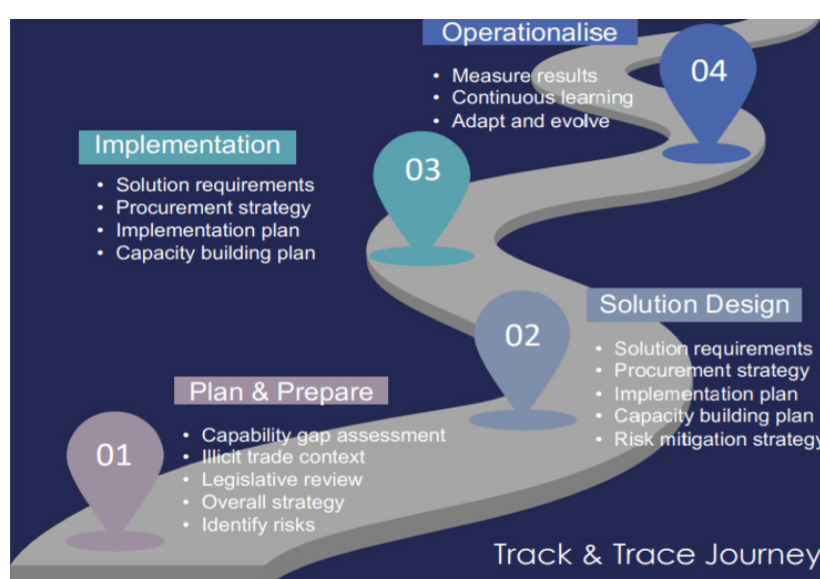
NO AWARDS TODAY

INTERPRETING AND IMPLEMENTING TRACK AND TRACE SYSTEMS – HOW THE 2019 FCA GUIDEBOOK CAN HELP

Dr. Allen Gallagher, Tobacco Control Research Group (a partner in STOP), University of Bath (UK), United Kingdom

Article 8 of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products outlines that all of its Parties need to establish a national tracking and tracing (T&T) system, which will be linked into a global information-sharing focal point to be located at the Convention Secretariat and accessible to all Parties. Each Party's system can be adapted to meet national requirements but there is some information that each system is required to provide about the tobacco products within it, for example, the date and location of manufacture. Beyond this, Article 8 does not outline any specific technological options for a T&T system that Parties can work from, meaning the Protocol's requirements need to be interpreted by Parties and translated into operational and technical specifications.

In order to support this process, in November 2019, the FCA released a guidebook on the implementation of Article 8 entitled: [FCTC Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products Guidebook on Implementing Article 8: Tracking & Tracing](#). This document serves as a resource for policymakers that need to implement the Protocol at the national level, providing an overview of the main elements of T&T and guidance on how policymakers can choose an appropriate system for their particular context.



There is no 'one size fits all' process for T&T implementation as each country will have its own relevant contextual factors (e.g. government structure, local illicit trade context). To address these factors, the Guidelines outlines how T&T implementation can be viewed as a 4-step journey. The steps include:

1. Understand your local context and highlight specific requirements for your system, including its governance model.
2. Begin designing technical specifications and a blueprint for the system.
3. Build the system - either via development in-house or via a process of selecting existing vendors.
4. Implement and integrate the system within existing structures and processes to ensure the operator has the ability to implement, administer, and enforce long-term.

Perhaps the most crucial point for Parties as they work on identifying the right T&T system for them, is to heed the Protocol's requirement that T&T responsibilities under the Protocol 'shall not be performed by or delegated to the tobacco industry.' A recent research article published in the British Medical

Journal's Tobacco Control journal, '[Turning a threat into an opportunity: British American Tobacco's weakening of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products](#),' outlines how the tobacco industry worked to influence the Protocol negotiations before developing a plan to gain control of national-level T&T implementation. To avoid falling victim to the industry's efforts to co-opt national T&T systems, Parties must be vigilant when choosing their own T&T systems. This includes adopting mechanisms which ensure that their T&T system is controlled by them and their competent authorities, and not by the tobacco industry. For further advice on achieving this, Parties can also consider the '[Protecting Your Country's Tobacco Track and Trace System From the Tobacco Industry](#)' policy brief from STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog.



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