

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form ([see an example](#)) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below. Some articles will have been accepted based in part or entirely on reviews undertaken for other BMJ Group journals. These will be reproduced where possible.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Exploring the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in four small island developing states of the Pacific
AUTHORS	Martin, Erik; de Leeuw, Evelyne

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Jeanie McKenzie Secretariat of the Pacific Community. NEW CALEDONIA
REVIEW RETURNED	04-Oct-2013

THE STUDY	the 'results' would have been enhanced by provision of more detail on the precise findings from the four countries on the current status with respect to various FCTC articles
GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>I am pleased to see the revision of this paper as to date there has been very little published on implementation of FCTC (despite there being considerable information available through country FCTC reporting mechanisms to WHO). Overall I think the paper does make a contribution to knowledge in the area.</p> <p>Some specific comments;</p> <p>Whilst I can see that Najam's 5C Protocol provides one alternate way of comparing common facilitators and barriers, in order to enhance the 'cross country synthesis' I would also have liked to have seen included a table comparing the situation on the various PICTs on key articles of the FCTC (including; Article 6 – Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco; Article 8 – Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke; Article 11 – Packaging and labelling of tobacco products, and; Article 13 – Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship'). I would have liked to have seen more detail on the exactly how each of these provisions has been dealt with, for at least the four FCTC articles listed above. I appreciate though that it might be difficult to do at this stage, but would have liked to have more information on, for example – what are the relative tax regimes and tax rates in each PICT, which areas are covered by the smokefree provisions, exactly what are the tobacco product labelling provisions in the respective Acts, etc.</p> <p>In the section; Exploit limited pro-tobacco activity in SIDS it says 'This is not to suggest industry activity is absent, but rather that there is less motivation and financial reward for a multinational tobacco company to mobilise action against tobacco control legislation in countries with very small populations' – Perhaps the author didn't pick up all examples of Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) but Vanuatu has in particular has long history of TII particularly in relation to industry trying to subvert national legislation an policy and receive favourable terms to start up a local tobacco industry.</p> <p>There are also a number of Typos/grammatical errors as follows; 'and specific the participants' roles in their country'.</p>

	<p>(In the Table – Commitment row) - Commitment at the ground level was hindered by and competing issues (Cook Islands/Nauru).... In Foster growth in anti-tobacco coalition activity: - 'close-knight relationships' Garner public support for tobacco control: - 'and it will also appreciate the context of that the local situation so scarce resources do not get misallocated'. (In the Table - Sustainable funding mechanisms for tobacco control) it says 'earmarking taxes to health promotion/tobacco control) have not been achieved in either of the countries examined'. Since 4 PICTs are under discussion I am not sure which PICTs the 'either' refers to.</p>
--	---

REVIEWER	Richard A. Daynard Public Health Advocacy Institute Northeastern University School of Law U.S.A.
REVIEW RETURNED	05-Oct-2013

- The reviewer completed the checklist but made no further comments.

VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

The comments by Jeanie McKenzie were also very helpful. I have provided a point by point response to this reviewer in reply to the suggested revisions. Note that the original comments are in quotation marks, which is followed by my response.

"Whilst I can see that Najam's 5C Protocol provides one alternate way of comparing common facilitators and barriers, in order to enhance the 'cross country synthesis' I would also have liked to have seen included a table comparing the situation on the various PICTs on key articles of the FCTC (including; Article 6 – Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco; Article 8 – Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke; Article 11 – Packaging and labelling of tobacco products, and; Article 13 – Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship'). I would have liked to have seen more detail on the exactly how each of these provisions has been dealt with, for at least the four FCTC articles listed above. I appreciate though that it might be difficult to do at this stage, but would have liked to have more information on, for example – what are the relative tax regimes and tax rates in each PICT, which areas are covered by the smokefree provisions, exactly what are the tobacco product labelling provisions in the respective Acts, etc."

Firstly, it should be considered that this study was primarily concerned with the variables that affect implementation in terms of a process, rather than outcome measures associated with each article. A broad focus on the variables that affect implementation was also desirable, rather than the extent to which each article was dealt with in each country (which is also very difficult to encapsulate for four countries in one journal article). The literature already provides some, albeit limited, information on outcome measures of specific articles. These reasons are why such measures were not included in this paper initially.

Nonetheless, the reviewer's comments remain valid because a table is a useful tool to conceptualise where the countries are at (and particularly where they started off) in relation to key FCTC articles. Therefore a table which gives an indication of how each of these provisions has been dealt with, at least in terms of legislation, has been added.

If the reviewer meant "dealt with" in terms of actual implementation and enforcement, there is an important point to be raised. With Articles 11 and 13, there is little enforcement required; hence

implementation is likely to reflect legislation. In this study, key informants and observation did not reveal any subversion of these articles. This has now been indicated in a new paragraph. The same could be said of imported cigarettes in light of Article 6. However, implementation/enforcement of Article 8 is difficult to ascertain as it is localised, requires active enforcement across all parts of each country, and is conducted in a staged manner for different public places. A more extensive and targeted research project than that was conducted by the authors would be needed to gain an adequate picture of whether this has been "dealt with" in terms of enforcement; hence I cannot provide this detail. There is also very little secondary in-country data on this.

"In the section; Exploit limited pro-tobacco activity in SIDS it says 'This is not to suggest industry activity is absent, but rather that there is less motivation and financial reward for a multinational tobacco company to mobilise action against tobacco control legislation in countries with very small populations' – Perhaps the author didn't pick up all examples of Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) but Vanuatu has in particular has long history of TII particularly in relation to industry trying to subvert national legislation an policy and receive favourable terms to start up a local tobacco industry."

I realise that there is some evidence of TII in Vanuatu - particularly through importers/representatives from BAT/Philip Morris attempting to meet with government staff, and some tobacco growing by local farmers - these were both referred to in the earlier 'Vanuatu' section. There is no other evidence in the literature, the documentation collected, or by informants of TII on any larger scale, and in fact informants commonly stated that the industry was not a major threat and the importers could be dealt with. Furthermore, the local tobacco industry mentioned to my knowledge is yet to commence operations, and although in future it may attempt to interfere with health policy, this is still an unknown. It is with this in mind, and the fact that this is relatively insignificant in comparison to industry-led activities seen in Australia and elsewhere (such as organising front groups, mass media campaigns, threatening governments in courts and so forth), that my initial statement has been made. Furthermore, there was limited TII in each of the other three countries examined. Therefore I stand by the initial sentence made in my paper, but I have tightened the language in it so that it is more specific to the point I intended to make (i.e. it now states -proportionally- less motivation....., and mobilise - comprehensive and coordinated- action...)

"There are also a number of Typos/grammatical errors as follows;

'and specific the participants' roles in their country'.

(In the Table – Commitment row) - Commitment at the ground level was hindered by and competing issues (Cook Islands/Nauru)....

In Foster growth in anti-tobacco coalition activity: - 'close-knight relationships'

Garner public support for tobacco control: - 'and it will also appreciate the context of that the local situation so scarce resources do not get misallocated'."

Each of these errors found by the reviewer have now been fixed as recommended.

"(In the Table - Sustainable funding mechanisms for tobacco control) it says 'earmarking taxes to health promotion/tobacco control) have not been achieved in either of the countries examined'. Since 4 PICTs are under discussion I am not sure which PICTs the 'either' refers to."

This has now been clarified and now states "...have not been achieved in any of the four countries examined", as it meant all of the countries.