

Country profile

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Summary of MPOWER measures in Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Compliance is scored 0—10 where 10 is the highest level of compliance. Compliance is measured only for P and E.

The methods used to compile this profile are described in the technical notes of the *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2023*.

M	P	O	W		E	R	
MONITORING	SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS	CESSATION PROGRAMMES	HEALTH WARNINGS	MASS MEDIA	ADVERTISING BANS	TAXATION	CIGARETTES LESS AFFORDABLE SINCE 2012
	10				—	0.0%	...

MPOWER score colour key

Complete measure	Moderate measure	Minimal measure	No policy or weak measure	Not categorized/ No data
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Affordability category

YES cigarettes became less affordable	NO cigarettes did not become less affordable	↔ no trend change in affordability of cigarettes
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The colours are explained in more detail in the MPOWER legend on the last page of this document.

In all tables “...” means data are not available and “—” means data are not required.

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Date of signature	Date of ratification (or legal equivalent)
17 June 2003	27 April 2005

Population	Income group
26 069 417	Low-income

National tobacco control programme as at 31 December 2022

Specific national government objectives in tobacco control	Yes
National agency or technical unit for tobacco control	Yes
Number of full-time equivalent staff	8
Government's expenditures on tobacco control, latest available year, in currency reported by country	...

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• Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies

Nationally representative surveys of adults

Recent	Yes
Representative	Yes
Periodic	Yes

Nationally representative surveys of adolescents

Recent	No survey in the past 5 years
Representative	—
Periodic	—

Tobacco use prevalence from the latest survey completed by 31 December 2022

	Tobacco use		Tobacco smoking		Cigarette smoking		Smokeless tobacco use		E-cigarette use	
	Current	Daily	Current	Daily	Current	Daily	Current	Daily	Current	Daily
Adults survey: National Adult Tobacco Survey, 2017; National, ages 15+										
Male	46.1	38.4	46.1	38.4	40.3	...	0.0	...	...	...
Female	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	...	0.0	...	...	...
Both sexes	22.0	18.3	22.0	18.3	19.2	...	0.0	...	...	...
Adolescents survey: No know surveys										
Male	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Female	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Both sexes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

WHO age-standardized estimated prevalence of smoking among those aged 15 years or more: Year 2021

These rates are modelled using all national survey data published since 1990 to estimate the underlying prevalence trends by sex, then applying age-standardization to allow comparison with other countries. They do not necessarily resemble country data from 2021. See the report for further details.

Prevalence (%)	Any tobacco use (smoked and smokeless)		Any tobacco smoking		Cigarette smoking	
	Current	Daily	Current	Daily	Current	Daily
Male	33.9	27.3	29.3	22.7
Female	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Both sexes	17.0	13.6	14.6	11.3

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	2022	Compliance
Complete* smoke-free laws exist in the following places:		
Health-care facilities	Yes	10
Educational facilities except universities	Yes	10
Universities	Yes	10
Government facilities	No	—
Indoor offices and workplaces	Yes	10
Restaurants	Yes	8
Cafés, pubs and bars	Yes	8
Public transport	Yes	10
All other public places	No	—
Compliance score		10
Law requires fines for smoking	No	—
Fines levied on the establishment	—	—
Fines levied on the smoker	—	—
Funds dedicated for enforcement	No	—
Complaint system that requires an investigation after a complaint	No	—

* "Complete" means that smoking is not permitted, with no exemptions allowed. Ventilation and any form of designated smoking rooms and/or areas do not protect from the harms of second-hand tobacco smoke, and the only laws that provide protection are those that result in the complete absence of smoking in all public places.

Subnational laws on smoke-free environments

Subnational jurisdictions do not have the authority to adopt laws that ban tobacco smoking in any or all of the places mentioned above.

Treatment of tobacco dependence as at 31 December 2022

Is there a toll-free telephone quit line/help line with a live person available to discuss cessation with callers in Democratic People's Republic of Korea?		No
	Is this product legally sold in the country?	Yes
	Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT, e.g., patch, gum, lozenge, spray or inhaler)	Pharmacy with Rx
	Where and how can this product be legally purchased in your country?	Partially
Does the national/federal health insurance or the national health service cover the cost of this product?	Does the national/federal health insurance or the national health service cover the cost of this product?	Partially
	Is any NRT on the country's essential drugs list?	...
	Is this product legally sold in your country?	No
	Where and how can this product be legally purchased in your country?	—
Bupropion (e.g., Zyban, Wellbutrin)	Does the national/federal health insurance or the national health service cover the cost of this product?	—
	Is this product legally sold in your country?	No
	Where and how can this product be legally purchased in your country?	—
	Does the national/federal health insurance or the national health service cover the cost of this product?	—
Varenicline	Health clinics or other primary care facilities	No
	Hospitals	Yes in most
	Office of a health professional	No
	In the community	Yes in most
Is smoking cessation support available in the following places in your country?	Other	Yes in most
	Health clinics or other primary care facilities	—
	Hospitals	Fully
	Office of a health professional	—
Does the national/federal health insurance or the national health service cover the cost of this support?	In the community	Partially
	Other	Fully

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Health warnings on tobacco packages

	2022				2022		
	Cigarettes	Other smoked tobacco	Smokeless tobacco		Cigarettes	Other smoked tobacco	Smokeless tobacco
Does the law mandate that health warnings appear on tobacco packages?	Yes	Yes	Sale is banned	Does the law require or establish fines for violations regarding health warnings on packages?	No	No	—
What percentage of the principal display areas of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings? FRONT AND REAR COMBINED	^1	^	—	Are there any laws requiring that tobacco packaging and labelling do not use misleading terms which imply the product is less harmful than other similar products, such as "low tar", "light", "ultra-light", or "mild"?	No	No	—
What percentage of the principal display areas of the FRONT of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings?	^1	^	—	Are there any laws requiring that tobacco packaging and labelling do not use figurative or other signs, including colours or numbers, as substitutes for prohibited misleading terms and descriptors?	No	No	—
What percentage of the principal display areas of the REAR of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings?	^	^	—	Are there any laws requiring that tobacco packaging and labelling do not use descriptors depicting flavours?	No	No	—
Does the law mandate that the warning be placed at the top of the principle display areas of the package?	No	No	—	Does the law ban the display of quantitative information on emission yields (such as tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide) on tobacco packaging, including when used as part of a brand name or trademark?	No	No	—
Does the law mandate font style, font size and colour for package warnings?	No	No	—	Does the law mandate the display of qualitative information on relevant constituents and emissions of tobacco products on tobacco packaging?	No	No	—
Are the health warnings rotating on packages?	No	No	—	Does the law mandate that this information is displayed on one or more of the principal display areas (front, rear) of the package?	—	—	—
Are the health warnings on packages written in the principal language(s) of the country?	No	No	—	Does the law prevent the display of expiry dates on tobacco packaging?	No	No	—
Does the law require that health warnings on packages are not obscured in any way, including by required markings such as tax stamps?	No	No	—	Is it mandatory for the quit line number to appear on packaging or labelling?	No	No	—
Do the health warnings on packages include a photograph or graphic?	No	No	—	Does the law mandate plain packaging?	No	No	—
Do health warnings appear on each package and any outside packaging and labelling used in the retail sale?	No	No	—				
Does the law on health warnings apply to products whether manufactured domestically, imported, AND for duty-free sale?	Yes	Yes	—				
Does the law state that warnings on packages do not remove or diminish the liability of the tobacco industry?	No	No	—				
Do health warnings on packages describe the harmful effects of tobacco use on health?	No	No	—				
Does the law mandate specific health warnings on packages?	No	No	—				
How many specific health warnings are approved by the law?	—	—	—				

[^] Size not specified.

¹ The law does not mention a minimum percentage, however textual warnings on 30% of the front pack are already implemented in the country.

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Anti-tobacco mass media campaigns between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2022

Was there a national campaign aired during the period?	No
Was the campaign aired on television and/or radio?	—
Before the campaign, was any research about the target audience conducted or used to develop the campaign messages/materials?	—
Were the campaign materials tested with the target audience before the campaign was run?	—
Did you obtain air time (radio, television) and/or placement (billboards, print advertising, etc) by purchasing or securing them using either your organisation/institution's internal resources or an external media planner or agency?	—
Did you, or your media planner/agency, use a monitor to confirm that the campaign materials were used as planned/scheduled on television, radio, print, billboards, internet, etc?	—
Did you work with journalists to gain publicity or coverage in the news for the campaign?	—
Was an evaluation done to assess the impact of the campaign?	—
Was this campaign part of a comprehensive government tobacco control program?	—

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	2022	Compliance
Bans on direct tobacco advertising		
National TV and radio	No	—
International TV and radio	No	—
Local magazines and newspapers	No	—
International magazines and newspapers	No	—
Billboards and outdoor advertising	No	—
Advertising at point of sale	No	—
Advertising on internet	No	—
Other direct bans	No	—
Compliance score of direct bans		—
Law requires fines for violations of direct advertising bans	—	
Bans on tobacco promotion and sponsorship		
Free distribution	No	—
Promotional discounts	No	—
Non-tobacco products identified with tobacco brand names	No	—
Brand name of non-tobacco products used for tobacco product	No	—
Appearance of tobacco brands in TV and/or films (product placement)	No	—
Appearance of tobacco products in TV and/or films	No	—
Prescribed anti-tobacco advertisements required to be presented before, during or after the broadcasting or showing of any visual entertainment media product that depicts tobacco products, use or images	No	—
Complete ban on sponsorship	No	—
Ban on Corporate Social Responsibility activities (CSR)	No	—
Tobacco companies/the tobacco industry publicizing their CSR activities	No	—
Entities other than tobacco companies/the tobacco industry publicizing the CSR activities of the tobacco companies	No	—
Tobacco companies funding or making contributions (including in-kind contributions) to smoking prevention media campaigns, including those directed at youth	No	—
Law explicitly bans tobacco products display at point of sale	No	—
Other indirect bans	No	—
Compliance score of indirect bans		—
Law requires fines for violations of indirect advertising bans	—	

Subnational laws on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

Subnational jurisdictions do not have the authority to adopt laws that ban TAPS in any or all of the places mentioned above.

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2022

Sales restrictions

Law bans tobacco vending machines	Yes
Law bans internet sales of tobacco products	No
Law bans imitation of tobacco products (candies, toys, sweets, etc.)	Yes
Minimum age at which a person may purchase tobacco products	18
Law bans the sale of single sticks of cigarettes	No
Minimum number of cigarettes allowed in a pack	None

ENDS 2022

ENNDS 2022

Regulation of ENDS and ENNDS

General bans	Ban on sale, import, export	Ban on sale, import, export
National laws or regulations regulate e-cigarettes	No	No
Ban on use of ENDS/ENNDS in indoor public places, workplaces and public transport	None	Same as ENDS
Health warning on device packaging	—	Same as ENDS
Health warning on e-liquid packaging	—	Same as ENDS
Ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of devices	No explicit ban	Same as ENDS
Ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of e-liquids	No explicit ban	Same as ENDS
Minimum age of sale	—	—
How flavours are regulated	—	—

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Tobacco taxation policy and prices as at 31 July 2022

Price of lowest cost brand and premium brand of cigarettes

	Price of lowest cost brand of cigarettes	Price of premium brand cigarettes
Tax inclusive retail sales price (TIRSP) for a pack of 20 cigarettes, country-reported value, 2022

Taxes on the most sold brand of cigarettes

	WHO's estimate for 2022
Price of most sold brand of cigarettes (standardized to a pack of 20)	
In currency reported by country	KPW 229.00
In international dollars (purchasing power parity adjusted)	...
In US dollars at official exchange rates	2.14
Taxes on this brand (% of retail price) *	
Total taxes	0.00%
Specific excise	0.00%
Ad valorem excise	0.00%
Value added tax (VAT) or sales tax	0.00%
Import duty	0.00%
Other taxes	0.00%

* Individual categories of tax may not add to total due to rounding.

Affordability

% of GDP per capita required to purchase 100 packs (or 2000 cigarettes) of the most sold brand of cigarettes (the higher the %, the less affordable)	...
Cigarettes are less affordable in 2022 compared to 2020	...
Cigarettes have become less affordable between 2012 and 2022 (trend average)	...

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Taxes on the most sold brand of specific tobacco products other than cigarettes

Price of most sold brand of...	Other smoked tobacco product (standardized to one piece for cigars and cigarillos and 20 grams for the other products)	Smokeless tobacco product (standardized to 20 grams)	Heated tobacco product (per 20 sticks)
In currency reported by country	Sale is banned
In international dollars (purchasing power parity adjusted)	—
In US dollars at official exchange rates	—
Taxes on the most sold brand (% of retail price) *			
Total taxes	—
Specific excise	—
Ad valorem excise	—
Value added tax (VAT) or sales tax	—
Import duty	—
Other taxes	—

* Individual categories of tax may not add to total due to rounding.

Taxes on the cheapest brand of e-liquids of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENNDS)

Price of cheapest brand of...	Closed systems e-liquids (1 ml)	Closed systems disposables (1 ml)	Open systems e-liquids (10 ml)
In currency reported by country	Not sold	Not sold	Not sold
In international dollars (purchasing power parity adjusted)	—	—	—
In US dollars at official exchange rates	—	—	—
E-liquid contains nicotine (Yes=ENDS, No=ENNDS)	—	—	—
Taxes on the cheapest brand (% of retail price) *			
Total taxes	—	—	—
Specific excise	—	—	—
Ad valorem excise	—	—	—
Value added tax (VAT) or sales tax	—	—	—
Import duty	—	—	—
Other taxes	—	—	—

* Individual categories of tax may not add to total due to rounding.

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Use of earmarked tobacco taxes for health

No earmarking of tobacco taxes for health reported.

Supplementary tax information

	Most recent data reported
Type of excise applied	—
Uniform excise tax applied Yes (uniform), No (tiered/varying rates)	—
Greater reliance on specific tax in mixed excise regime	—
Minimum specific tax applied in ad valorem or mixed excise regime	—
Retail price used as base of ad valorem component in ad valorem or mixed excise regime (or retail price exclusive of VAT)	—
Specific tax component automatically adjusted for inflation (or other)	—
Price dispersion: share of cheapest brand price in premium brand price (the higher the % the smaller the gap)	...
Sales of duty (or excise) free cigarettes banned	—

Annual tax revenues from tobacco products at the national/federal level

	Most recent data reported
Year	...
Is tax revenue data for all tobacco products or cigarettes only?	...
Currency	...
Total Excise (specific and ad valorem)	...
Value added tax (VAT) and other sales taxes	...
Import duties	...
All other taxes (excluding corporate taxes on tobacco companies)	...
Total	...

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Legend: Summary of MPOWER measures (see page 1)

MONITORING: PREVALENCE DATA

	No known data or no recent data or data that are not both recent and representative
	Recent and representative data for either adults or youth
	Recent and representative data for both adults and youth
	Recent, representative and periodic data for both adults and youth

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS: SMOKING BANS

	Data not reported
	Complete absence of ban, or up to two public places completely smoke-free
	Three to five public places completely smoke-free
	Six to seven public places completely smoke-free
	All public places completely smoke-free (or at least 90% of the population covered by complete subnational legislation)

CESSATION PROGRAMMES: TREATMENT OF TOBACCO DEPENDENCE

	Data not reported
	None
	NRT and/or some cessation services (neither cost-covered)
	NRT and/or some cessation services (at least one of which is cost-covered)
	National quit line, and both NRT and some cessation services cost-covered

HEALTH WARNINGS: HEALTH WARNINGS ON CIGARETTE PACKAGES

	Data not reported
	No warnings or small warnings
	Medium size warnings missing some or many appropriate characteristics OR large warnings missing many characteristics
	Medium size warnings with all appropriate characteristics OR large warnings missing some appropriate characteristics
	Large warnings with all appropriate characteristics

MASS MEDIA: ANTI-TOBACCO CAMPAIGNS

	Data not reported
	No national campaign conducted between July 2020 and June 2022 with duration of at least three weeks
	National campaign conducted with one to four appropriate characteristics
	National campaign conducted with five to six appropriate characteristics, or with seven characteristics excluding airing on television and/or radio
	National campaign conducted with at least seven appropriate characteristics including airing on television and/or radio

ADVERTISING BANS: BANS ON ADVERTISING, PROMOTION AND SPONSORSHIP

	Data not reported
	Complete absence of ban, or ban that does not cover national television, radio and print media
	Ban on national television, radio and print media only
	Ban on national TV, radio and print media as well as on some but not all other forms of direct and/or indirect advertising
	Ban on all forms of direct and indirect advertising (or at least 90% of the population covered by complete subnational legislation)

TAXATION: SHARE OF TOTAL TAXES IN THE RETAIL PRICE OF THE MOST SOLD BRAND OF CIGARETTES

	Data not reported
	<25% of retail price is tax
	≥25% and <50% of retail price is tax
	≥50% and <75% of retail price is tax
	≥75% of retail price is tax

AFFORDABILITY

YES	Cigarettes less affordable – per capita GDP needed to buy 100 packs (or 2000 cigarettes) of the most sold brand increased on average between 2012 and 2022.
NO	Cigarettes more affordable – per capita GDP needed to buy 100 packs (or 2000 cigarettes) of the most sold brand declined on average between 2012 and 2022.
↔	No trend change in affordability of cigarettes since 2012.