

Country profile

Republic of Korea

Summary of MPOWER measures in 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, 2025*.

M	P	O	W		E	R	
MONITORING	SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS	CESSATION PROGRAMMES	HEALTH WARNINGS	MASS MEDIA	ADVERTISING BANS	TAXATION	CIGARETTES LESS AFFORDABLE IN 2024 THAN IN 2014
	6				7	73.8%	↔

MPOWER score colour key

Complete measure	Moderate measure	Minimal measure	No measure or weak measure	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)

21 Jul 2003

16 May 2005

Population
(UN WPP 2024)

Income group
(World Bank 2024)

51 718 000

High income

National tobacco control programme as at 31 December 2024

Specific national government objectives in tobacco control	Yes
National agency or technical unit for tobacco control	Yes
Number of full-time equivalent staff	5
Government's expenditures on tobacco control, latest available year (2024), in currency reported by country	KRW 99 970 000 000

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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	Yes
Representative	Yes
Periodic	Yes

Tobacco use prevalence from the latest survey completed by 31 December 2024

	Tobacco use		Tobacco smoking		Cigarette smoking		Smokeless tobacco use		E-cigarette use	
	Current	Daily	Current	Daily	Current	Daily	Current	Daily	Current	Daily
Adults survey: Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (KNHANES), 2023; National, ages 19+										
Male	37.3	...	...	...	32.1	28.0	...	...	5.3	...
Female	6.6	...	...	...	5.1	3.9	...	...	1.3	...
Both sexes	21.9	...	...	...	18.5	15.9	...	...	3.3	...
Adolescents survey: Korea Youth Risk Behavior Web-based Survey, 2024; National, ages 13-18										
Male	5.8	...	...	...	4.8	2.3	...	...	3.7	...
Female	3.2	...	...	...	2.4	0.9	...	...	2.2	...
Both sexes	4.5	...	...	...	3.6	1.6	...	...	3.0	...

WHO age-standardized estimated prevalence of smoking among those aged 15 years or more: Year 2023

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 2023. 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	32.4	30.2	30.8	27.5
Female	5.7	5.0	5.4	4.3
Both sexes	19.0	17.6	18.1	15.9

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 **Protect** people from tobacco smoke

	2024	Compliance
Complete* smoke-free laws exist in the following places:		
Health-care facilities	Yes	10
Educational facilities except universities	Yes	10
Universities	No	—
Government facilities	No	—
Indoor offices and workplaces	No	—
Restaurants	No	—
Cafés, pubs and bars	No	—
Public transport	No	—
Compliance score		6
Law requires fines for smoking	Yes	
Fines levied on the establishment	Yes	
Fines levied on the smoker	Yes	
Funds dedicated for enforcement	Yes	
Complaint system that requires an investigation after a complaint	Yes	

* "Complete" means that smoking is not permitted, with no exemptions allowed. Laws that allow for the provision of smoking areas or designated smoking rooms in public places and workplaces are not effective at protecting people from second-hand smoke, so where they are allowed, the places are not considered smoke-free environments.

Subnational laws on smoke-free environments

Subnational jurisdictions have the authority to adopt laws that ban tobacco smoking in any or all of the places mentioned above, however no subnational bans have been reported.

 **Offer** help to quit tobacco use

Treatment of tobacco dependence as at 31 December 2024

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT, e.g., patch, gum, lozenge, spray or inhaler)	Is there a toll-free telephone quit line/help line with a live person available to discuss cessation with callers in Republic of Korea?	Yes
	Is this product legally sold in the country?	Yes
	Where and how can this product be legally purchased in your country?	In a pharmacy without a prescription
	Is this product cost-covered?	Fully
	Is any NRT on the country's essential drugs list?	No
Bupropion (e.g., Zyban, Wellbutrin)	Is this product legally sold in your country?	Yes
	Where and how can this product be legally purchased in your country?	In a pharmacy with a prescription
	Is this product cost-covered?	Fully
	Is this product on the country's essential drugs list?	No
	Is this product legally sold in your country?	Yes
Varenicline	Where and how can this product be legally purchased in your country?	In a pharmacy with a prescription
	Is this product cost-covered?	Fully
	Is this product on the country's essential drugs list?	No
	Is this product legally sold in your country?	No
	Where and how can this product be legally purchased in your country?	—
Cytisine	Is this product cost-covered?	—
	Is this product on the country's essential drugs list?	...
	Health clinics or other primary care facilities	Yes in most
	Hospitals	Yes in some
	Office of a health professional	Yes in some
Is smoking cessation support available in the following places in your country?	In the community	...
	Other	Yes in most
	Health clinics or other primary care facilities	Fully
	Hospitals	Fully
	Office of a health professional	Fully
Does the national/federal health insurance or the national health service cover the cost of this support?	In the community	...
	Other	Fully

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Health warnings on tobacco packages

	2024				2024		
	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	Yes	Does the law require or establish fines for violations regarding health warnings on packages?	Yes	Yes	Yes
What percentage of the principal display areas of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings? FRONT AND REAR COMBINED	50	50	50	Does the law state that warnings on packages do not remove or diminish the liability of the tobacco industry?	No	No	No
What percentage of the principal display areas of the FRONT of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings?	50	50	50	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"?	Yes	Yes	Yes
What percentage of the principal display areas of the REAR of the package is legally mandated to be covered by health warnings?	50	50	50	Does the law require that packaging and labelling do not use figurative or other signs, including colours or numbers, as substitutes for prohibited misleading terms and descriptors?	No	No	No
Does the law mandate that the warning be placed at the top of the principle display areas of the package?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Are there any laws requiring that tobacco packaging and labelling do not use descriptors depicting flavours?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the law mandate font style, font size and colour for package warnings?	Yes	Yes	Yes	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	No
Are the health warnings rotating on packages?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Does the law mandate the display of qualitative information on relevant constituents and emissions of tobacco products on tobacco packaging?	Yes	No	No
Multiple warnings must appear concurrently	Yes	Yes	No	Does the law mandate that this information is displayed on one or more of the principal display areas (front, rear) of the package?	Yes	—	—
Date/length of time specified after which the warning will change	Yes	Yes	Yes	Does the law prevent the display of expiry dates on tobacco packaging?	No	No	No
Are the health warnings on packages written in the principal language(s) of the country?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Is it mandatory for the quit line number to appear on packaging or labelling?	Yes	Yes	Yes
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	No	Does the law mandate plain packaging?	No	No	No
Do the health warnings on packages include a photograph or graphic?	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Do health warnings appear on each package and any outside packaging and labelling used in the retail sale?	No	No	No				
Does the law on health warnings apply to products whether manufactured domestically, imported, AND for duty-free sale?	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Do health warnings on packages describe the harmful effects of tobacco use on health?	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Does the law mandate specific health warnings on packages?	Yes	Yes	Yes				
How many specific health warnings are approved by the law?	10	10	1				

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Anti-tobacco mass media campaigns between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2024

Was there a national campaign aired during the period?	Yes
Was the campaign aired on television and/or radio?	Yes
Before the campaign, was any research about the target audience conducted or used to develop the campaign messages/materials?	Yes
Were the campaign materials tested with the target audience before the campaign was run?	Yes
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?	Yes
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?	Yes
Did you work with journalists to gain publicity or coverage in the news for the campaign?	Yes
Was an evaluation done to assess the impact of the campaign?	Yes
Was this campaign part of a comprehensive government tobacco control program?	Yes

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Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

	2024	Compliance
Bans on direct tobacco advertising		
National TV and radio	Yes	10
International TV and radio	Yes ¹	
Local magazines and newspapers	No	—
International magazines and newspapers	No	
Billboards and outdoor advertising	Yes	10
Advertising at point of sale	No	—
Advertising on internet	Yes	
Other direct bans	Yes	
Compliance score of direct bans		9
Law requires fines for violations of direct advertising bans	Yes	
Bans on tobacco promotion and sponsorship		
Free distribution	No	—
Promotional discounts	Yes	8
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		5
Law requires fines for violations of indirect advertising bans	Yes	

¹ The law does not explicitly address cross-border advertising. However, given that advertising is banned on all TV and radio, it is interpreted that both domestic and international levels are covered by the ban.

Subnational laws on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

Subnational jurisdictions do not have the authority to adopt laws that ban any of the tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship mentioned above.

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Sales restrictions	2024
Law bans tobacco vending machines	No
Law bans internet sales of tobacco products	Yes
Law bans imitation of tobacco products (candies, toys, sweets, etc.)	No
Minimum age at which a person may purchase tobacco products	19
Law bans the sale of single sticks of cigarettes	No
Minimum number of cigarettes allowed in a pack	None

Regulation of ENDS and ENNDS	ENDS 2024	ENNDS 2024
General bans	None	None
Ban on use of ENDS/ENNDS in indoor public places, workplaces and public transport	Partial ban	None
Health warning on device packaging	None	Same as ENDS
Health warning on e-liquid packaging	Warning required	None
Ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of devices	No explicit ban	Same as ENDS
Ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of e-liquids	Partial ban	None
Minimum age of sale	19	Same as ENDS
How flavours are regulated	None are banned	Same as ENDS

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Tobacco taxation policy and prices as at 31 July 2024

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, 2024	KRW 4285.71	...

Taxes on the most sold brand of cigarettes

	WHO's estimate for 2024
Price of most sold brand of cigarettes (standardized to a pack of 20)	
In currency reported by country	KRW 4 500.00
In international dollars (purchasing power parity adjusted)	5.73
In US dollars at official exchange rates	3.25
Taxes on this brand (% of retail price) *	
Total taxes	73.85%
Specific excise	64.76%
Ad valorem excise	0.00%
Value added tax (VAT) or sales tax	9.09%
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 in 2024 (the higher the %, the less affordable)	0.92%
Cigarettes are less affordable in 2024 compared to 2022	No
Cigarettes have become less affordable between 2014 and 2024 (trend average)	No change

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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	Smokeless tobacco product (standardized to 20 grams)	Heated tobacco product (per 20 sticks)
In currency reported by country	KRW
	4 500.00
In international dollars (purchasing power parity adjusted)	5.73
In US dollars at official exchange rates	3.25
Taxes on the most sold brand (% of retail price) *			
Total taxes	66.77%
Specific excise	57.68%
Ad valorem excise	0.00%
Value added tax (VAT) or sales tax	9.09%
Import duty	0.00%
Other taxes	0.00%

* 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

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

National Health Promotion Fund (841 KRW per 20 sticks); Waste charges (24 KRW per 20 sticks); Tobacco farming support fund (5 KRW per 20 sticks).

Supplementary tax information

	2024
Type of excise applied	Specific
Uniform excise tax applied Yes (uniform), No (tiered/varying rates)	Yes
Greater reliance on specific tax in mixed excise regime	—
Minimum specific tax applied in ad valorem or mixed excise regime	—
Minimum price policy	No
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)	No
Price dispersion: share of cheapest brand price in premium brand price (the higher the % the smaller the gap)	...
Price gap decreased between 2022 and 2024	...

Tax structure - new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products

	2024
Type of excise tax applied on ENDS/ENNDS e-liquids	Specific
If an excise tax applies on ENDS/ENNDS, whether applied on all e-liquids or on liquids containing nicotine only	nicotine only
If an excise tax applies on ENDS/ENNDS, whether an excise tax applied on the device of ENDS/ENNDS products	No
Type of excise tax applied on HTPs sticks	Specific
If an excise tax applies on HTPs, whether an excise tax applies on the device of HTPs	No

Tax administration

	2024
Tax stamps, fiscal marks, banderoles or any other type of marking applied on cigarettes	No
Unique identifiers/markings required to contain data for tracking and tracing purposes	No

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

	Most recent data reported
Year	2022
Is tax revenue data for all tobacco products or cigarettes only?	All tobacco products
Currency	KRW
Total Excise (specific and ad valorem)	10 472 700 000 000
Value added tax (VAT) and other sales taxes	1 484 500 000 000
Import duties	2 200 000 000
All other taxes (excluding corporate taxes on tobacco companies)	0
Total	11 959 400 000 000

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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 2022 and June 2024 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 2014 and 2024.
NO	Cigarettes more affordable – per capita GDP needed to buy 100 packs (or 2000 cigarettes) of the most sold brand declined on average between 2014 and 2024.
↔	No trend change in affordability of cigarettes since 2014.