

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
**Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**  
**Health Services Division**  
**Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka**

**Guidelines for the Employees of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and its Directorates, Departments, and Agencies; for Tobacco Control, WHO FCTC Article 5.3, 2025**

Whereas the use of tobacco significantly increases the risk of having non-communicable diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, and neurological problems; and tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death, with half of all tobacco users die who don't quit<sup>1</sup>; and globally, tobacco kills more than 7 million people each year, including an estimated 1.6 million non-smokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke<sup>2</sup>; of which 161,000 deaths occur in Bangladesh<sup>3</sup>; and

Whereas Bangladesh signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) on June 16, 2003, at the 56th Conference of the World Health Organization, 2003 and ratified it on May 10, 2004, to discourage the use of smoking and tobacco products; and

Whereas the FCTC meticulously outlines essential actions for preventing preventable deaths due to tobacco use, and strategies for reducing demand and supply of tobacco for tobacco control, and obligates member states to take planned steps for the implementation of the WHO FCTC; and

Whereas the Preamble of the WHO FCTC states that member states shall remain vigilant against any attempts by tobacco companies that may hinder or undermine tobacco control initiatives, and shall be aware of all activities of tobacco companies that negatively impact tobacco control initiatives; and

Whereas the said Convention has provided guidance to the member states to formulate, implement, regularly update, and review multi-sectoral national tobacco control strategies, plans, and activities; and

Whereas the said Convention has also guided member states to take measures to protect the formulation and implementation of tobacco control-related public health policies from the commercial and other interests of tobacco companies, in consonance with existing relevant laws; and

Whereas the Guidelines for the Implementation of FCTC Article 5.3, adopted at the 3rd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the WHO FCTC held in 2008, imposed an obligation on member states to take measures to limit all forms of interaction with tobacco companies and ensure transparency in such interactions; and

Whereas it is expedient to enforce the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005 (Act No. 11 of 2005) reduce the use of tobacco and tobacco products, raise awareness against tobacco, protect the people of this country from the harmful effects of passive smoking, and above all, from the curse of tobacco; and

Whereas, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, it is necessary to formulate guidelines to be followed by the employees of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Directorates, Departments, and Agencies under it, while interacting with tobacco companies;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>

<sup>2</sup> WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2023

<sup>3</sup> WHO Bangladesh Tobacco Factsheet, 2018



**Therefore, the following guidelines are hereby formulated:**

**1. Title, Application and Commencement-** (1) These guidelines shall be called the 'Guidelines for the Employees of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and its Directorates, Departments, and Agencies; for Tobacco Control, WHO FCTC Article 5.3, 2025'

(2) These guidelines shall apply to the employees of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the directorates, departments, and agencies under it, and to all matters directly or indirectly related to the functions assigned to them.

(3) It shall come into force immediately.

**2. Definitions-** (1) Unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context, in these guidelines-

(a) 'Act' means the 'Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005' (Act No. 11 of 2005);

(b) 'Tobacco' means tobacco as defined in clause (kha) of section 2 of the Act;

(c) 'Tobacco Company' means tobacco manufacturers, wholesale distributors, and importers of tobacco products;

(d) 'Tobacco Product' means a tobacco product as defined in clause (ga) of section 2 of the Act;

(e) 'Person' means person as defined in clause (jha) of section 2 of the Act;

(f) 'Employee' means an employee of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and directorates, departments, and agencies under it, as defined in clause (16) of section 2 of the Government Service Act, 2018 (Act No. 57 of 2018), to whom the Government Employees (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 2018 apply;

(g) 'Authority' means authority as defined in clause (3) of section 2 of the Government Service Act, 2018 (Act No. 57 of 2018) and clause (ga) of rule 2 of the Government Employees (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 2018.

(2) Any word or expression used in these guidelines for which no definition has been provided shall be applicable in the sense in which it is used in the Act or relevant rules.

**3. Goals, Objectives, etc. of the Guidelines-** The goals and objectives of these guidelines shall be as follows, namely: -

(a) To protect the tobacco control and public-health related policies and activities of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare from the commercial and other interests of tobacco companies, and the effective implementation of the Act;

(b) To ensure transparency and accountability in communication with tobacco companies;

(c) To ensure the implementation of FCTC as a ratifying country and monitor its progress.

**4. Implementation of Guidelines-** The Health Services Division of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shall implement these guidelines.

**5. Communication with Tobacco Companies-** (1) Communication with tobacco companies by those to whom these guidelines apply under clause 1(2) shall only be permissible with the approval of the Authority, when it is essential for the purpose of controlling tobacco companies and their activities or for effectively controlling and supervising the use of tobacco products.

(2) Necessary communication with tobacco companies shall be conducted in such a manner that it does not give rise to any notion of potential partnership or collaboration.

(3) The instructions mentioned in Annexure 'Ka' shall be followed for communication with tobacco companies.

**6. Partnership Prohibition-** The employees of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and directorates, departments, and agencies under it, and all those directly or indirectly related to them, shall not directly or indirectly undertake, support, or approve the following activities, namely: -

(a) Any potential or actual partnership with tobacco companies, or with any person associated with the interests of tobacco companies, and any unacceptable or unenforceable agreement or any voluntary arrangement;

(b) Participation in awareness campaigns organized or supported by tobacco companies for youth or the general public, or any initiative directly or indirectly related to tobacco companies, their logos, brand names, or trademarks;

(c) Any position paper or policy material prepared by tobacco companies or in collaboration with tobacco companies, or by any organization acting as their front group; and

(d) Any other activity, initiative, or step that protects or promotes the interests of tobacco companies and related persons.

**7. Cancellation of Partnership Agreements-** (1) Any partnership agreement or collaboration between an employee under these guidelines and a tobacco company shall be cancelled within 60 (sixty) days from the date of issuance of these guidelines.

(2) No agreement contrary to these guidelines shall be executed in the future.

(3) No employee under these guidelines shall accept any remunerative or non-remunerative position in a tobacco company.

**8. Conflict of Interest of Tobacco Companies-** (1) All persons (to whom these guidelines apply) shall ensure that, person employed by a tobacco company or any person or entity associated with its interests shall not be a member of any government agency, committee, or advisory group under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare involved in tobacco control, or public health policy formulation, or implementation.

(2) No institution under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shall enter into contracts with candidates or bidders whose interests conflict with tobacco control policy when undertaking any work for the formulation and implementation of tobacco control-related public health policies.

(3) No employee under these guidelines and no one directly or indirectly involved on behalf of all autonomous institutions and departments under it shall accept any money, gifts, services, financial or any other type of benefits and cooperation from tobacco companies.

**9. No Preferential Service-** No employee under these guidelines shall provide any incentive, special privilege, or preference to a tobacco company or its representative in an unlawful manner.

**10. Prohibition on Participation in 'Corporate Social Responsibility Programs'-** Employees under these guidelines shall refrain from supporting or participating in any type of corporate social



responsibility activities undertaken by tobacco companies, such as: inauguration, photo sessions, scholarships, awards, joint statements, etc.

- 11. Deviation from Guidelines, etc.-** (1) In case of any deviation or violation of these guidelines, the Authority may take action under the Government Employees (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 2018 or any other service and conduct rules applicable in such cases.  
(2) In case of any deviation or violation of these guidelines, it shall be notified in writing by any person to the Director General of the National Tobacco Control Cell, Health Services Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.  
(3) The Director General shall take necessary action within 10 (ten) working days of receiving such complaint as per clause 10(2).
- 12. Submission of Report to the Government-** (1) The Heads of Directorates, Departments, and Agencies under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shall send reports on the compliance of these guidelines to the National Tobacco Control Cell every 3 (three) months.  
(2) The Director General of the National Tobacco Control Cell shall submit a report on the compliance of these guidelines to the Government every 3 (three) months.
- 13. Removal of Difficulties-** If any difficulty is observed due to ambiguity in implementing these guidelines, the Government may take any necessary measures by order to remove it.
- 14. Publication of Translated Text in English-** (1) After the commencement of these guidelines, the Government shall publish an authentic English Text of these guidelines.  
(2) In case of conflict between the Bengali and English texts, the Bengali text shall prevail.

Signed on 12/02/2025



(Md Saidur Rahman)

Secretary

Health Services Division

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

## Annexure 'A'

### **Guidelines to be followed for communication/meetings with tobacco companies:**

- a. All concerned employees must be informed or aware of any communication with tobacco companies. For employees of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and directorates, departments, and agencies under it, and anyone working on their behalf, approval must be obtained from the appropriate authority of the rank of Joint Secretary or above.
- b. The agenda for the proposed communication/meeting/engagement must be set in writing and at least 1 (one) week in advance. Approval must be obtained from the appropriate authority of the rank of Joint Secretary or above for employees of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, including all directorates, departments, and agencies under it, and anyone working on their behalf. Employees must strictly follow the agenda and structure of the communication/meeting/engagement. The date and approved agenda of such communication/meeting/engagement must be published on the website beforehand.
- c. Before such communication/meeting/engagement, it is essential to clarify that such meeting does not imply partnership, dialogue, or collaboration, and tobacco companies must ensure that they will not misrepresent or misuse such communication/meeting/engagement or its discussions and decisions.
- d. The individuals participating in the communication/meeting/engagement must be predetermined, and all their details, including names and designations, to be fully published on the website and other media, and these details must be included in the meeting records.
- e. Participants on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, including all directorates, departments, and agencies under it, shall keep the meeting brief and reserve the right to conclude the meeting at any time.
- f. All communication/meeting/engagement shall take place entirely within the offices of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and directorates, departments, and agencies under it. Any communication/meeting/engagement outside office premises is strictly prohibited.
- g. Employees participating in such communication/meeting/engagement shall prioritise the importance of public health and consider public welfare as a priority.
- h. All forms of communication/meetings/engagement with tobacco companies must be documented, and a meeting record of such meetings must be maintained and submitted by the concerned employee to the Authority.

