Background of the ITC Project

- Launched in 2002 as an international research and evaluation platform for measuring and understanding the psychosocial and behavioral impact of tobacco control policies and other population-level interventions (e.g., mass media campaigns). The longitudinal design also allows for studies of the natural history of tobacco use and of the factors that affect quitting vs. continued smoking/tobacco use.
- The ITC Project has grown to be a consortium of over 100 researchers across 22 countries inhabited by over 50% of the world’s population and over 70% of the world’s tobacco users.
- The initial line of research of the ITC Project is the ITC Surveys—parallel longitudinal cohort surveys of representative samples of tobacco users (smokers in all countries; users of other tobacco products [e.g., bidis and smokeless tobacco in India and Bangladesh]). In 15 countries, the samples are nationally representative.
- The ITC Survey is extensive, and contains critical measures (“key indicators”) of policy effectiveness (such as policies of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control). We strive to make the ITC Surveys as consistent as possible across time and access countries to enhance the possibility of cross-country comparisons.

Health Warnings

Evaluation of the impact of pictorial health warnings continues to be a focus of the ITC Surveys.

- Four Country: Longitudinal analyses show that health warnings can inhibit relapse (Partos et al., 2013).
- Weartout of warning effectiveness in Canada and U.S. Longitudinal analyses show wearout of warnings over 8 years. (Mitcham et al., 2013).
- Thrasher et al., ongoing extensive wearout project in Al, CA, & other countries.

Price/Taxation/Purchasing

Affordability

- In general, affordability of cigarettes is becoming LESS affordable in high-income countries but MORE affordable in low-income countries.

Smoke-Free Laws

Comprehensive smoke-free laws, when implemented per FCTC Article B Guidelines, lead to near-total elimination of indoor smoking in key public venues. In the graph on the right, % of restaurants where smoking was observed at last visit went to near-zero except in Germany (many exceptions and each state has its own law). Smoking in restaurants in China continues to be extremely high, and still very high in India (despite the comprehensive law of 2008).

Example of the Enormous Challenge in Reducing Smoking in India From TCP India Report (September 2013)

ITC National Reports in 2013

- India: ITC Survey conducted in 4 states: Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal (N = 2,000 tobacco users and 600 non-tobacco users in each state). Focus on bidis vs. cigarette use, and on smokeless vs. smoked tobacco. Will compare with Bangladesh (also substantial bidis and smokeless). Wave 2 currently in the field.
- ITC Africa Projects: The ITC Project is working with key tobacco control researchers in Zambia and Kenya to assess the current effectiveness of tobacco control measures and to establish a system for rigorous evaluation of upcoming tobacco control policies.

Recent New Countries

- ITC India Report—Released at Endgame Conference New Delhi, September 2013
- ITC Canada National Report—Released at the National Conference on Tobacco or Health, Ottawa, Nov 2013

Some Current/Future ITC Activities

- Plain packaging in Australia (future in UK, NZ)
- Increasing focus on non-cigarette tobacco (India, Bangladesh)
- Major focus on electronic cigarettes
- ITC Product Packaging Project (Hammond, Thrasher et al.): experimental work on content and design features
- ITC Product Repository: product testing, heavy metals
- Africa: policy impact, research—coping, farming
- Major focus on economic analysis: affordability, price avoidance strategies, tax structure effects, linkage to poverty; brand switching; illicit trade
- China: potential for real tobacco control action. Positive signals from new government. ITC China Survey expanding to include rural areas. Second ITC China supplement for Tobacco Control in preparation for 2013
- National Reports for Brazil, France, Zambie, Kenya in 2014
- Linkages with U.S. PATH Cohort Study (which has ITC roots)
- Cross-country analyses: what is “universal” in policy impact and what seems to be country-specific?