

## 10 Myths About the Lebanese Tobacco Market

1. **“Lebanon does not have exceedingly high smoking rates when compared to other countries”. NOT TRUE.** On average a Lebanese adult smokes 12.4 packs per month. This is 12 times greater than that of Singapore and 3 times that of Syria.
2. **“The Tobacco sector creates revenue to the Lebanese economy”. NOT TRUE.** The cost of tobacco smoking on the Lebanese population exceeds the benefits it brings in by at least \$55 million per year.
3. **“Tobacco consumption in Lebanon is not as costly as in other nations”. NOT TRUE.** The Lebanese tobacco consumption costs the national economy 1.1% of GDP annually, whereas in Egypt and Singapore it reaches 0.7% and 0.2% of GDP respectively. Tobacco costs Lebanon more than what the country invests every year in upgrading its infrastructure.
4. **“Tobacco farmers are completely dependant on tobacco cultivation as a means of income”. NOT TRUE.** Studies show that 40% of Lebanese tobacco farmers rely on off-farm jobs to earn a decent living. Tobacco only constitutes one third of their income. Another 23% of farmers rotate crops; thus not only depending on tobacco but are also growing a variety of crops.
5. **“The advertising sector in Lebanon is highly dependant on tobacco advertising”. NOT TRUE.** Tobacco advertising merely constitutes 13% of the total advertising spending in the country. According to Arabad Magazine, cigarettes are not amongst the top 10 advertised brands.
6. **“Environmental cost due to smoking is not of importance”. NOT TRUE.** The national environmental bill reached \$13.6 million in 2007 and it only included partial forest fires cost and waste collection.
7. **“Tobacco free workplaces will harm businesses”. NOT TRUE.** Even tobacco companies admit that smoking bans in the workplace don't affect productivity.
8. **“Banning smoking in public places will reduce the revenues of the hospitality sector”. NOT TRUE.** Other countries that have implemented smoking bans have not retrieved a negative effect.
9. **“Limiting cigarettes consumption will have significant effects on the economy”. NOT TRUE.** The effect of limiting consumption will reduce the losses incurred on the national level, as this would decrease the health and environmental costs.
10. **“Revenues generated in the Health Care sector will be lost if smoking rates are reduced as a result of the new policy”. NOT TRUE.** Instead of spending so much money on curative care, the Ministry of Health could rather spend more on preventative care. This will further reduce costs from other diseases caused by Tobacco.