



BAPA
Benin Alcohol Policy Alliance



MINI-STUDY REPORT

**SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF ALCOHOL
CONSUMPTION IN BENIN**



Supported by



April 2025



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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ALCRER.....	Association for the Fight Against Racism, Ethnocentrism and Regionalism
BAPA.....	Benin Alcohol Policy Alliance/Alliance Béninoise pour des Politiques de contrôle de l'Alcool
DCRF.....	Directorate for Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control
EDS.....	Demographic and Health Survey
INSAE.....	National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis
INstaD.....	National Institute of Statistics and Demography
WHO.....	World Health Organization
ONG.....	Organisation Non Gouvernementale
PNLMNT.....	Programme National de Lutte contre les Maladies Non Transmissibles
SAFER	Strengthen pricing policies, Alcohol availability, Free access to treatment, Enforcement of bans on alcohol advertising and promotion, and Reduction of drink-driving
SSA.....	Food Safety Service
UEMOA.....	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WAAPA.....	West African Alcohol Policy Alliance

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Acknowledgement

This analysis of the situation regarding alcohol consumption in Benin was made possible thanks to the contributions and commitment of several institutions, organizations, and key individuals who provided their expertise, data, and analyses throughout the process.

First and foremost, we express our deep gratitude to the World Health Organization (WHO) for its technical support and for providing strategic tools and international references, particularly the SAFER interventions, which served as the analytical framework for the study.

We also extend our thanks to the West African Alcohol Policy Alliance (WAAPA) for its regional support and its ongoing commitment to strengthening alcohol control policies in West Africa. Its support has helped enrich the strategic discourse and anchor this study within a regional advocacy framework.

We would also like to thank the various Beninese government agencies that agreed to share their experiences, data, and perspectives during interviews and consultations. Our special thanks go to the Ministry of Health through the National Program for the Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (PNLMNT), as well as to the technical directorates and agencies involved in the regulation and control of alcoholic beverages, notably the Directorate of Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DCRF) and the relevant departments responsible for health safety and consumer protection.

Our sincere thanks also go to civil society organizations, community leaders, local elected officials, and experts who agreed to share their experiences and perspectives during the qualitative interviews. Their contributions have provided a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and institutional realities related to alcohol consumption in Benin.

Finally, we thank all the partners and collaborators of the Beninese Alliance for Alcohol Control Policies (BAPA) for their commitment and efforts in collecting, analyzing, and validating the information that led to the production of this report.

To all those who, in one way or another, contributed to the completion of this study, we extend our sincere thanks.

Summary

The situational analysis report on alcohol consumption in Benin highlights the growing challenges linked to this phenomenon, particularly among young people in Benin. The study reveals a widespread availability of alcohol, often unregulated, accompanied by a high level of consumption leading to serious health and social repercussions, such as the emergence of chronic diseases, domestic violence and road accidents. Building on the WHO's SAFER interventions, this report examines existing policies, highlights major shortcomings in their implementation, and proposes specific recommendations. These recommendations aim to strengthen regulation, intensify awareness campaigns, increase taxes on alcoholic products, and improve control mechanisms in order to reduce the negative impacts of alcohol on Beninese society.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Alcohol is a substance commonly consumed in many countries, including Benin. While this may be considered a cultural or social phenomenon, it is important to recognize that alcohol consumption is a growing public health problem in Benin.

The situation is exacerbated by increased accessibility of alcoholic beverages, particularly through informal sales outlets, aggressive marketing practices, and insufficient regulation. These factors contribute to a rise in health and social problems, such as chronic diseases, domestic violence, and road accidents. Given this issue, it is essential to analyze alcohol consumption in Benin as a whole in order to formulate appropriate recommendations

1.2. Study objectives

The overall objective of this study is to identify the challenges and gaps in alcohol regulation in Benin and to propose concrete measures for better management of alcohol consumption. Specifically, it aims to:

- OS1: Conduct a literature review on alcohol control in Benin;
- OS2: Analyze the current situation in terms of availability, consumption and impacts of alcohol;
- OS3: Evaluate existing policies and strategies regarding alcohol regulation.

2. Overview of Alcohol Regulation in Benin

To gain a better understanding of the situation regarding alcohol control in Benin, it is important to examine all the strategies implemented by public actors.

Following an analysis of the constraints associated with the development of strategies to combat alcohol consumption in Benin, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are summarized as follows:

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence at the Ministry of Health a framework or program for addressing alcohol-related noncommunicable diseases - Existence of decrees (Decree No. 1982-256 (regulations governing the opening and operation of alcohol outlets) and Decree No. 90/1483 (conditions and procedures for the operation of alcohol outlets) governing the opening and operation of alcohol outlets, restaurants, bars, and nightclubs - A decree prohibiting alcoholic beverages packaged in plastic bags (production, importation, and distribution) effective May 2024 - Application of taxation (customs and excise duties) and control of import flows for alcoholic beverages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of sanctions for driving under the influence, as well as measures to protect pedestrians and other road users from drunk drivers - Weak enforcement of labeling regulations regarding the distribution of alcoholic and similar beverages - Lack of a national alcohol policy document. - Alcoholic and similar beverages are classified as lawful products. - Difficulties in accessing funding for awareness campaigns and regulation
OPPORTUNITES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of the National Forum on the Regulation of Unhealthy Foods, Beverages, and Tobacco in Benin (PNLMNT/MS) - Advocacy statement from the National Forum on the Regulation of Unhealthy Foods, Beverages, and Tobacco in Benin calling for strengthened alcohol control measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional sale of alcohol in unlabeled containers - The government's clear political commitment to promoting tourism (organization of Vodun Days, etc.) - Alcoholic beverages are served as appetizers - Growing influence of the alcohol industry - Issuance of permits for promotions of alcoholic beverages and similar products - Existence of a dynamic informal sector in the importation of alcoholic and similar beverages due to Benin's proximity to Nigeria and other border countries - Lack of specific programs to educate children about the harmful effects of alcohol consumption

3. Methodology

3.1. Conceptual framework

To conduct this analysis, a positive approach based on the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) was used. The SAFER interventions served as the primary guide. These interventions include strengthening restrictions on alcohol availability, enforcing laws against drunk driving, improving access to care for at-risk individuals, strictly regulating advertising, and increasing taxes on alcoholic products. The conceptual framework also incorporates a comparative analysis of Benin's policies with those of other African countries that have implemented similar initiatives. This allows for an assessment of the effectiveness of current approaches and highlights gaps that need to be addressed.

3.2. Data collection methods

Data was collected from several sources:

- ✦ **Literature review:** An in-depth analysis of WHO reports, statistical data from the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INStAD) and academic studies on alcohol consumption.
- ✦ **Qualitative interviews:** Interviews were conducted with policymakers, civil society actors, health professionals, and community leaders. These discussions with stakeholders provided diverse perspectives on alcohol-related issues.
- ✦ **Field observation:** Direct observation was carried out in formal and informal points of sale, as well as during alcohol industry advertising campaigns to understand marketing dynamics.

4. Results

4.1. Alcohol availability and consumption in Benin

4.1.1. Alcohol availability in Benin

Alcohol is widely available in Benin, both through formal and informal channels. Alcoholic products can be found in supermarkets, bars, restaurants, and even gas stations. Traditional drinks like " Sodabi " and " Tchoukoutou " are sold in local markets and at community ceremonies. This accessibility is exacerbated by the lack of strict legal restrictions.

Alcohol sales are everywhere, even in sensitive areas such as around schools, training centers, and hospitals. Unlike other countries where specific hours are imposed for alcohol sales, there are no time limits in Benin. These practices, which facilitate access for young people, thus increase the risks associated with early consumption.

4.1.2. Alcohol consumption in Benin

Statistics show that 37.5% of men and 17.5% of women regularly consume alcohol. The average per capita alcohol consumption is 1.1 liters per year for young people aged 15 and over (World Bank, 2024). Beer is the most consumed beverage, accounting for 64% of consumption, followed by spirits (13%) and wines (10%). Young adults aged 15 to 24 constitute the most affected demographic group, with an average consumption of 14.3 liters for men compared to 5.3 liters for women (World Health Organization). Among adults, 25.5% of women and 43.7% of men consume alcohol, while among adolescents under the age of 15, 19.8% of women and 22.8% of men begin consuming alcohol (INSAE, 2016). Alcohol consumption is common in both urban and rural areas. Drug use is therefore widespread in Benin and primarily affects young women and men aged 15 and over. This is alarming, given the long-term implications for their health and development.

4.2. Dangers associated with alcohol consumption

Several studies have shown that alcohol consumption is associated with an increased risk of health problems such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, liver disease, neurological disorders, road accidents and domestic violence (Arora et al., 2022).

Alcohol consumption in Benin has serious health and social consequences. In 2019, alcohol was responsible for nearly 2.4 million deaths, representing 4.3% of all deaths worldwide. (Arora et al., 2022) In Benin, 5.5% of deaths primarily related to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and cirrhosis are caused by alcohol. Road accidents caused by drunk drivers are also a major cause of mortality and morbidity.

On a social level, alcohol is a key factor in domestic violence. Alcohol consumption causes 78% of domestic violence—physical, sexual, or emotional—among women in households where the husbands are drunk (Final Report of the Fifth Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) in Benin, 2017-2018). Similarly, the percentage of women who have physically assaulted their partners varies from 1% when the partner does not drink to 10% when he is frequently drunk.

4.3. Stakeholder perceptions

This section examines the different perceptions of public actors and civil society on the cultural, social, and political aspects of alcohol consumption, as well as current challenges and possible solutions. Stakeholders responded to three questions (see appendix).

✓ Ms. Justine SEZONLIN, wife of DANDJINO, Health Action Inspector and Communicator for Health Promotion at the PNLMT of the Ministry of Health

Question: What are the health risks of alcohol consumption?

"Alcohol consumption can have harmful effects on health, especially if it is excessive or prolonged. Here are the main dangers:"

1. Immediate effects

- ✚ *Intoxication: Can lead to loss of coordination, concentration problems, slowed reflexes and risky behavior.*
- ✚ *Accidents: Alcohol increases the risk of road accidents, falls and injuries.*
- ✚ *Alcohol overdose (alcoholic coma): Excessive consumption in a short period of time can lead to respiratory depression, coma, or even death.*

2. Long-term effects on organs

- ✚ *Liver: Increased risk of hepatic steatosis (fatty liver), alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis.*
- ✚ *Brain: Cerebral atrophy, cognitive impairment, memory loss.*
- ✚ *Heart: High blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmias.*
- ✚ *Pancreas: Chronic or acute pancreatitis.*

3. Chronic diseases

- ✚ *Cancers: Alcohol is a risk factor for several types of cancer, including cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, and colon.*
- ✚ *Cardiovascular diseases: In addition to the effects on the heart, it increases the risk of stroke.*

4. Mental health

- ✚ *Depression and anxiety: Alcohol can worsen or cause mood disorders.*
- ✚ *Dependence: Risk of developing an alcohol use disorder (alcoholism), with withdrawal symptoms in case of abrupt cessation.*
- ✚ *Impairment of social functions: Family conflicts, professional difficulties or social isolation.*

5. Effects on pregnancy

- ✚ *Alcohol can cause birth defects.*

6. Immune system

- ✚ *Weakening of the immune system, increasing the risk of infections;*

7. Tips for reducing risks

- ✚ Limit alcohol consumption (follow public health recommendations);
- ✚ Prioritize periods without alcohol to give the body a break;
- ✚ Avoid alcohol completely in certain situations (pregnancy, driving, certain medical treatments);
- ✚ If you or someone you know is concerned about alcohol consumption, don't hesitate to consult a healthcare professional.

✓ **Mr. ASSOGBA Vihoutou Martin, Director of the NGO Association for the Fight Against Racism, Ethnocentrism and Regionalism (ALCRER)**

First question: Why is alcohol consumption so widespread, particularly among young people, in both urban and rural areas of Benin?

“ My name is Martin Vihoutou ASSOGBA, President of the Association for the Fight Against Racism, Ethnocentrism and Regionalism (NGO ALCRER). This organization is dedicated to promoting good governance, fighting corruption and impunity, as well as civic and moral education.

Regarding your question, it touches on a fundamental issue: educating the population from the ground up. Alcohol consumption, particularly among young people, is often explained by a persistent illusion: that one can escape difficulties and stress by taking refuge in alcohol. This is a major mistake, because once the effects of alcohol wear off, the problems remain unchanged. Alcohol provides no nutritional benefits; on the contrary, it is seriously harmful to health.

In the past, awareness campaigns broadcast on national radio warned of the dangers of alcohol, emphasizing that it "corrodes, ruins, and kills." However, some downplayed these warnings, mistakenly believing that these effects only applied to germs. In reality, alcohol does indeed destroy human beings, impairing their behavior and judgment when consumed in excess.

Today, the normalization of this practice among young people is sometimes linked to a quest for fashion or to traditions such as the consumption of " amansindji ." These beverages, made from roots mixed with alcohol, are often consumed before meals under the pretext of stimulating the appetite. Unfortunately, this habit contributes to disrupting their bodies.

It is therefore essential to raise awareness and educate from a very young age. Parents, teachers, professionals, and committed NGOs must redouble their efforts to wage this fight. Because alcohol benefits no one; it destroys inexorably.

Second question: What, in your opinion, are the shortcomings of the current policy and how can alcohol consumption be better regulated in Benin?

"Regarding potential shortcomings in current policy, it should be noted that the state is often faced with a multitude of challenges deemed priorities, which explains the lack of targeted measures on this issue. However, it would be wrong to consider this as a total disinterest."

The responsibility for raising awareness about the harmful effects of alcohol lies primarily with civil society. It is up to NGOs, community organizations, educators, and each of us, as citizens, to address this issue. We must educate our loved ones and fellow citizens, especially those who rely on alcohol daily, in order to prevent the resulting tragedies.

✓ **Mr. KOUAGOU N'da Aldo, Mayor of Boukoumbé**

"The sellers of adulterated alcohol have become powerful people whom we cannot even worry about despite our various actions, Madam Prefect, help us or we will soon have no able-bodied arms left,"¹ November 2020.

✓ **MEMBERS OF THE 8TH LEGISLATURE**

"During the plenary session of the National Assembly of Benin on Thursday, May 16, 2024, the deputies addressed the oral question with debate on the manufacture, marketing, and consumption of adulterated alcohol. The deputies affirmed the urgent need to act to save young people, especially in the north ...²"

4.4. Analysis of strategies and interventions aimed at reducing alcohol consumption in Benin

4.4.1. Restrictions on the availability of alcohol in Benin

At the international level, several international conventions and treaties exist that aim to regulate the marketing of alcohol. Among these are the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Alcohol Action Plan (GAAP) which also includes measures for the prevention of alcohol consumption, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which provides for measures to combat alcohol trafficking.

At the national level, these are the measures implemented by public authorities to control the production and importation of alcoholic products within the country. The sale of alcohol is regulated by several laws, including:

¹ Consumption of adulterated alcohol: The prefect of Atacora wants to combat the scourge – Le Potentiel

² The Atacora alcohol scandal: Parliament is awakened, Banouto raised the alarm in a 2022 investigation

i. Law No. 2014-09 of August 14, 2014 regulating the production, marketing, consumption and advertising of alcoholic beverages in Benin.

This law includes measures to regulate the production, marketing, consumption, and advertising of alcoholic beverages, notably measures to protect young people from access to alcohol and to combat drunk driving. However, points of sale are not subject to strict controls regarding sales hours or proximity to schools and other sensitive areas.

ii. The Customs Code of Benin

This code includes provisions for the taxation and control of the import and export of alcoholic beverages.

iii. The Highway Code

This code provides for penalties for drunk driving, as well as measures to protect pedestrians and other road users from drunk drivers.

In addition, in Benin there are regulatory bodies such as the Directorate of Consumption and Fraud Repression (DCRF) and the Food Safety and Consumer Products Service (SSA), whose role is to ensure compliance with laws and regulations relating to the marketing of alcohol and the protection of consumers.

4.4.2. Alcohol taxation in Benin

Benin's alcohol pricing policy is based on WAEMU directives, which do not take into account locally produced alcohol sold on the informal market. Indirect taxes on the consumption or sale of alcohol in Benin are governed by community directives and the General Tax Code (CGI). Alcoholic beverages classified as specific products are taxed as follows³:

Table 1: Indirect taxes on alcoholic products

Types of alcoholic products	Beers and ciders	Wines	Liqueurs and champagnes
Tax rate	20%	40%	45%

Source: Code général des Impôts (2025)⁴

According to Table 1 above, the most heavily taxed alcoholic beverages are liqueurs, champagnes, and wines. However, in Benin, the most consumed alcoholic beverages are beers and ciders, which are taxed very lightly. But since the promulgation of the 2025 Finance Law, a single tax rate of 15% has been applied to alcoholic beverages.

³ [654de635d8cad_ALL ABOUT EXCISE DUTIES.pdf](#)

⁴ Article 277, paragraphe 2 du CGI (2025)

This reflects a decrease in tax rates on alcoholic products in Benin, specifically 5% on beers and ciders, 25% on wines, and 30% on liqueurs and champagnes. Furthermore, in accordance with Directive No. 03/98/CM/UEMOA of December 22, 1998, concerning the harmonization of legislation... Member States regarding Excise Duties, as amended by Directive No. 03/2009/CM/UEMOA of 27 March 2009, the limits community for the determination of tax rates applicable to products are fixed as follows:

Table 2: Limits on Alcoholic Beverage Tax Rates

Products	Tax rate	
	Minimal	Maximum
Alcoholic beverages	15%	50%

Source: Adapted from (UEMOA, 2009)

According to Table 2, it appears that none of the alcoholic beverages are yet subject to a maximum tax rate in Benin.

Benin also requires a licensing fee⁵ for any person or company engaged in the retail sale of alcoholic or fermented beverages, whether for consumption on the premises or for takeaway. This fee applies to each retail establishment, with no reduction for branches. Alcoholic beverages are defined as fortified wines, vermouths, quinine, and all other fermented or alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content exceeding 12%, with the exception of pharmaceutical-grade mint liqueur and other alcoholic medicinal products. This definition includes traditional drinks such as " Sodabi ," " Atan, " and the millet wine known as " Tckoukoutou ."

The fee for the license contribution is set as follows⁶:

Revenue bracket (in FCFA)	First zone	Second zone
Less than or equal to 500,000,000	50,000	30,000
Greater than 500,000,000 and less than or equal to one billion	80,000	60,000
More than one billion	100,000	100,000

⁵ Article 213 of the French General Tax Code (2025)

⁶ Article 215 of the French General Tax Code (2025)

Furthermore, the points of sale are not subject to strict controls regarding sales hours or proximity to schools and other sensitive areas.

4.4.3. Restrictions on alcohol consumption in Benin

4.4.3.1. Sale of alcohol

Purchasing alcohol in Benin is done like any other ordinary food product, with the exception of tobacco products. There is no legal minimum age for buying alcohol, either in or outside of retail outlets. Therefore, alcoholic products can be sold to children, minors, and teenagers at any time. Alcoholic products are found at all party venues, around playgrounds, schools, and training centers for young people. Unlike other countries where the hours, days, and locations for selling alcoholic products are regulated, their sale is virtually unregulated in Benin. Alcoholic beverage outlets are not uncommon on the streets of Benin. Alcoholic products are displayed in bars, restaurants, hotels, markets, supermarkets, at the beach, gas stations, kiosks, and universities without any restrictions.

4.4.3.2. Alcohol advertising

Within Benin, legally binding regulations regarding advertising, product placement, sponsorship, and alcohol promotion are nonexistent. Specifically, producers are not required to include mandatory health warnings on alcoholic beverage containers in advertisements. These warnings, as defined by the Ministry of Health, should be printed on alcohol containers and updated periodically.

The alcohol market remains open to the alcohol industry, which continues its efforts to encourage high alcohol consumption in Benin. Meanwhile, advertising for tobacco, its derivatives, and related products is strictly regulated by Articles 9, 10, and 11 of Law No. 2017-27 of December 18, 2017, concerning the production, packaging, labeling, sale, and use of tobacco, its derivatives, and related products in the Republic of Benin.

4.4.4. Compliance with restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcoholic products

In Benin, the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) for driving is 0.05%, generally for both private individuals and professionals (WHO, 2018). According to the Highway Code, it is illegal to drive after consuming alcohol. In 2024, the Republican Police conducted several checks to identify intoxicated drivers. Unfortunately, these random roadside checks appear to have ceased, even though intoxicated drivers remain a constant danger to the public on the roads. According to Ministerial Decree No. 043/MIC/DC/SGM/ DConc /SA/008SGG24 , the production, import, and distribution of alcoholic beverages in plastic sachets is prohibited in Benin. However, these same products continue to be sold on the market. The national control and monitoring systems in place are irregular and encourage the consumption of alcoholic products despite the provisions of the Highway Code.

5. Recommendations

It is important to protect present and future generations from the devastating social, environmental, and economic dangers associated with alcohol consumption. To this end, the following measures are necessary:

- ❖ *Strengthen regulatory measures on the sale of alcohol:*
 - ✚ *Establish specific hours for the sale of alcoholic beverages;*
 - ✚ *Ban the sale of alcohol in sensitive areas such as schools, hospitals and places of worship;*
 - ✚ *Establish a minimum legal age for the purchase and consumption of alcohol.*
- ❖ *Increase taxes on alcoholic products:*
 - ✚ *Raise the tax rates on alcoholic beverages;*
- ❖ *Strengthen control and monitoring:*
 - ✚ *Involve law enforcement for regular checks, particularly regarding drunk driving;*
 - ✚ *Strengthen traceability and regulations on the production and sale of local alcoholic beverages such as " Sodabi " and " Tchoukoutou ".*
- ❖ *Strictly regulate advertising and marketing:*
 - ✚ *Ban advertising that encourages alcohol consumption, especially advertising that targets young people;*
 - ✚ *Make health warnings mandatory on all alcoholic products.*
- ❖ *Implement awareness campaigns:*
 - ✚ *Organize educational campaigns to inform about the dangers of alcohol, specifically targeting young people and women;*
 - ✚ *Collaborating with local communities and opinion leaders to promote responsible behavior.*
- ❖ *Strengthening health services:*
 - ✚ *Develop specialized care centers for people with alcohol addiction;*
 - ✚ *Train healthcare staff to effectively identify and treat alcohol use disorders.*
- ❖ *Encourage research and evaluation:*
 - ✚ *Supporting studies on the impact of alcohol consumption in Benin;*
Regularly assess the effectiveness of implemented policies and adjust strategies accordingly.

6. Conclusion

Benin has a relatively high rate of alcohol consumption, particularly among men, with significant health consequences. Current practices lack strict regulations on the sale of alcohol (beer, wine, and spirits) and advertising due to interference from the alcohol industry, which may require reassessment to improve public health. It should also be noted that the consumption of local alcoholic products such as palm wine called "Sodabi" and "Atan," and millet wine called "Tckoukoutou," escapes all forms of control in Benin, even though the quantities consumed today are considerable at the national level.

The costs associated with alcohol consumption are multifaceted for society: (i) increased public health spending and law enforcement (the State), (ii) low productivity and longer delivery times (businesses) and (iii) illnesses, road accidents and domestic violence within families (households).

In short, it is urgent that Benin develop its national policy document on alcohol.

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Appendix: Interviews with public and civil society stakeholders

Good morning/afternoon. As part of the situational analysis of alcohol consumption in Benin by the NGO BAPA (Benin Alcohol Policy Alliance) , we would like to gather your opinion on the following three questions:

Q1: Why is alcohol consumption so widespread, especially among young people in both urban and rural areas of Benin?

Q2: What are the health risks of alcohol consumption?

Q3: What are the shortcomings of current policies and how can alcohol consumption be better regulated?

Thank you for your cooperation



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