

Tobacco Industry Interference & New Products, Advertising and Promotions: Countering Strategies

Mary Assunta

Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance

28 July 2026



Tobacco Industry: Legal but Lethal

- Tobacco products should never have been legalized.
- All tobacco and nicotine products are harmful.
- TI is the problem, not part of the solution.
- State should promote good choices, not harmful and “less harmful” choices.

WHO IS THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY?

Big Tobacco



Nicotine industry

JUUL Labs, USA

RELX International,
China

SMOORE, Hong
Kong

SMOK, China

Vapresso, China

Geek Vape, China

Innokin, UK

VPFIT, China

Elf Bar, China

NJOY, USA

+ many others

Biggest E-cig manufacturers and tobacco companies

Juul: Altria previously
owned 35%,
NJOY – owned by Altria
BAT own Vuse, glo
Imperial Brands own Blu

Front groups and industry associations

Int'l Tobacco Growers Assn
Global Action to End Smoking (GAES)
Retailer Associations

Leaf merchants

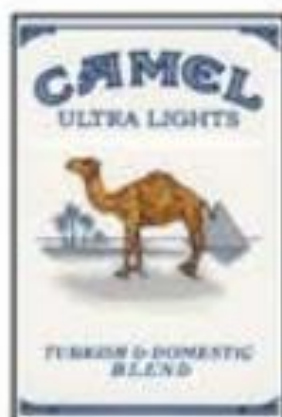
Universal Leaf Tobacco Co
Alliance One International
Premium Tobacco Group

Lobbying firms and Think Tanks

Oxford Economics



Camel



VELO



Vuse



glo



LD



Nordic Spirt



Logic



Ploom X



Marlboro



On!



JUUL



IQOS



Swisher
Sweets



ROGUE



Swisher
E-cigarette



West



Skruf



blu



PULZE



Swedish Match.

White Owl



ZYN



General Snus



Top Nicotine Pouch Brands Promoted in 2026



Brands	Flavors	Strength / Pouch	Formats	Price Per Can	
ZYN	30+ (Fusions and Singular)	3mg to 18mg	Slim and Mini	\$4.99	Swedish Match (PMI)
VELO	22+ (Fusion and Singular)	4mg to 14mg	Slim and Mini	\$5.19	BAT
On	12 (Singular)	3mg to 9mg	Slim and Mini	\$4.99	Helix Innovations (Altria)
LOOP	30+ (Singular and Fusion)	6mg to 16mg	Slim	\$4.99	Another Snus Factory (Sweden; KT&G/Altria)
Iceberg	30+ (Fusions)	35mg	Slim	\$4.69	Neoptolem (Poland)
Killa	30+ (Singular and Fusion)	9mg to 12mg	Slim and Mini	\$4.19	NGP Tobacco (Denmark)
Zone	7 (Singular)	6mg to 9mg	Slim	\$4.29	ITG Brands (Imperial in US)

Note: Every brand on our list includes 20 pouches per can. These products are also tobacco-free and smoke-free.

Did You Know:

Nic pouches come in different sizes?



SUPER SLIM



SLIM



REGULAR



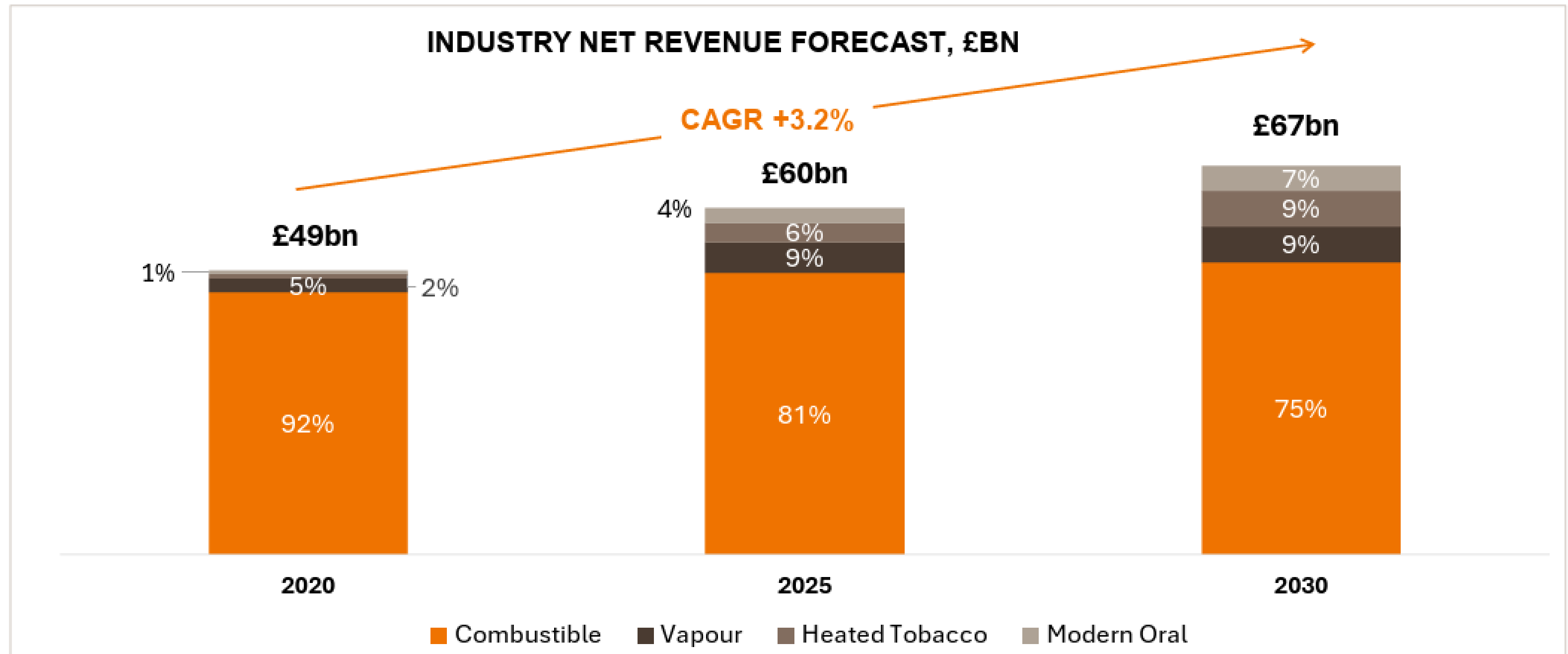
REGULAR PLUS



Shape	Description	Brands (US)
Slim/Oval	Curved, ergonomic, discreet	ZYN, VELO, Rogue
Square	Boxy, more rigid, intense	White Fox, Black Buffalo
Teardrop	Tapered, directional release	V&YOU, Nordic Spirit (select)

Industry Revenue Projections

SUPPORTING LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND RETURNS



Harm replacement, not harm reduction

Philip Morris International sells IQOS
as part of its “smoke-free future”.

The truth:

“It's not designed to
help stop people from smoking.
It's designed to be a replacement.”
- PMI salesman

Industry “transformation” ≠ part of the solution

“Smoke-free alternatives have a role to play in public health.

“While it’s best to quit cigarettes or never start smoking, smokers who don’t quit have a right to choose better alternatives.

“Society needs the right regulation to support those better choices.”

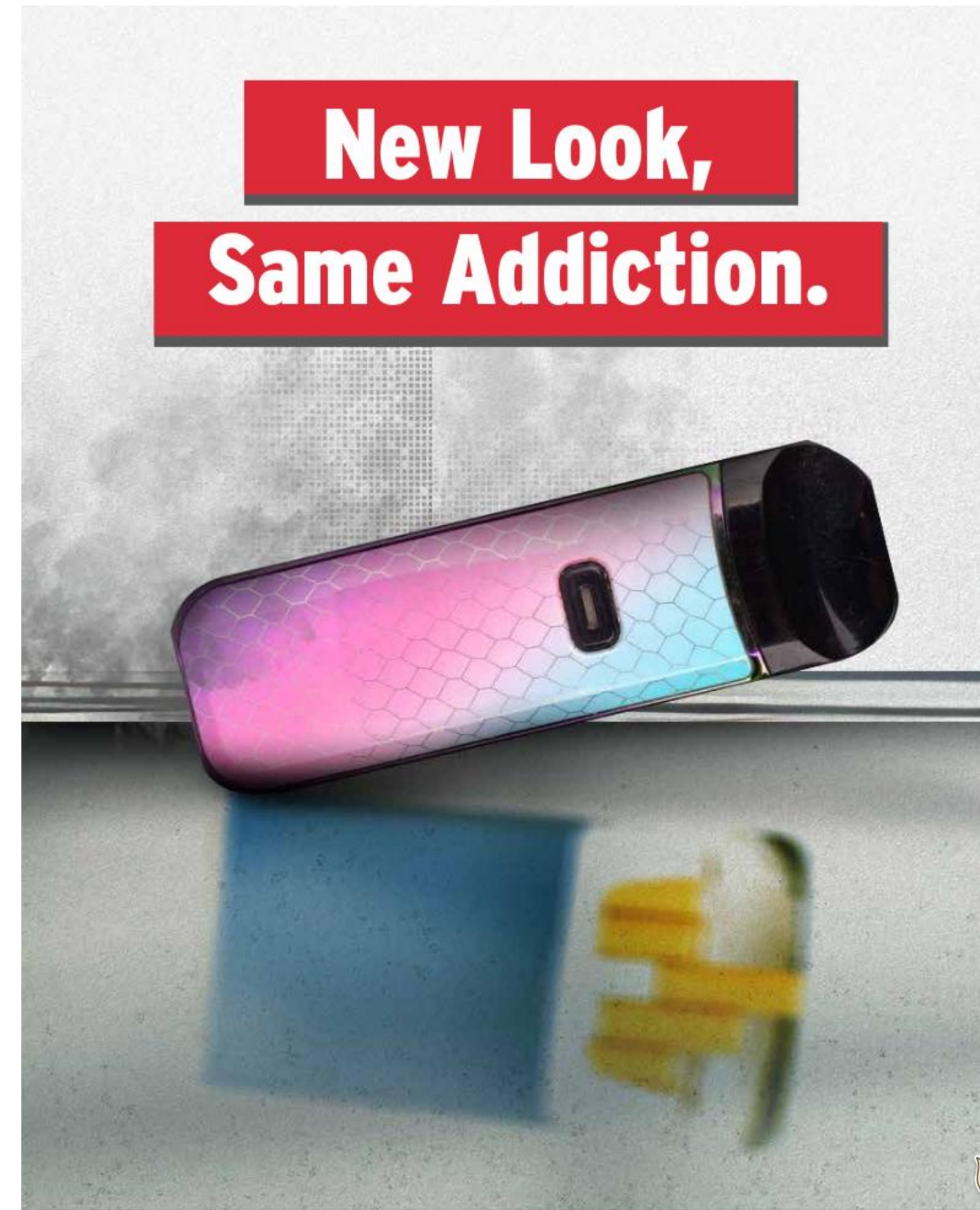


- **PMI:** Delivering a Smoke-Free Future
- **BAT:** A Better Tomorrow
- **JT:** Creating a Better Future
- **IB:** Something Better

Emerging Threats: E-cigarettes and vaping

The “Harm reduction” Trap

- New products, Same interference.
- Industry uses “harm reduction” to target youth
- Lobbying governments to lift bans (Thailand) or not impose a ban (Philippines, Malaysia)



Flavors attract youths

"It's a well-known fact that teenagers like sweet products. Honey might be considered."

Marketing Innovations. (1972). Youth cigarette - New concepts [memo to Brown & Williamson]. Bates No. 170042014



>15,500 e-liquid flavors

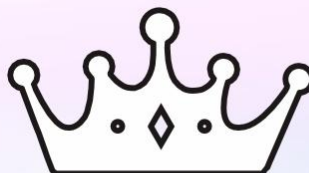
Which flavor is your favorite?



6 in 1

6 ADJUSTABLE FLAVORS

10 PUFFS



BANG BLAZE



TYPE-C



850mAh



OIL TANK 3
6 in 1 FLAVORS



LED SCREEN



PURE FLAVORS
MODE



FLAVORS COMBINATION
MODE

6 ADJUSTABLE FLAVORS



DKiss 21

Smokeless Nicotine Inhaler

THE 21st STICK

It's smokeless!

A discreet and stylish solution to satisfy your nicotine cravings anytime anywhere.

SOLID NICOTINE



100% Smoke-free



Solid Nicotine



Non-contact
Heating Technology



No Harmful Chemicals
Inhaled & Exhaled



Patent-protected



DKiss 21

QUUQ Nicotine Inhaler & Nico Plug-in
(OEM Service Available)



QUUQ

DKiss Nicotine Inhaler
& Nico Capsule



02



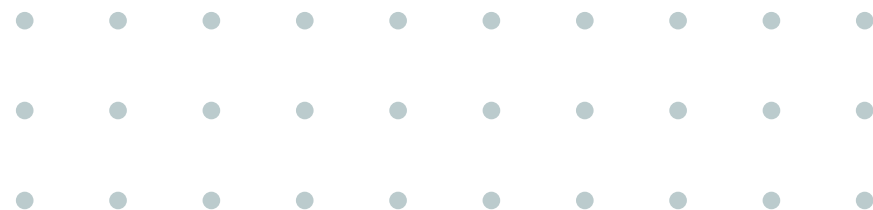
Common Tactics of the Tobacco Industry

Use front groups and allied groups

- Legitimize their position to either delay, water down, or oppose TC policies

Threat of filing cases

- TC policies can be challenged causing a delay in implementation
- Prevent other communities from replicating good TC practices



Main Industry Allies and Front Groups

International industries allies, front groups

- **Knowledge Action Change (KAC)**

Changed name to **Global Forum on Nicotine Ltd** in Nov 2024

➤ Activity - Global report



- **Consumer Choice Center**

➤ US lobby group based in Washington DC, operating since 2017, has received funds from BAT



- **World Vapers Alliance**

➤ Brings vapers around the world to lobby for pro-harm reduction policy



- **Global Forum on Nicotine Limited**

➤ organiser of Global Forum on Nicotine to provide platform to promote tobacco harm reduction



We are innovation

Global network covering 30 countries, over 50 think tanks, foundations and NGOs

Regional Harm Reduction Groups & Allies



PROFESSOR TIKKI PANG



PROF. DR. ROHAN SAVIO
SEQUEIRA



PROFESSOR DR. SHARIFA
EZAT WAN PUTEH



ASA SALIGUPTA



NANCY LOUCAS



DR. ALEX WODAK



SAMSUL KAMAL ARRIFIN

Global Action to End Smoking (FSFW) – Gives Grants to Promote Harm Reduction



Get The Facts

For People Who Smoke

Get Involved

Donate

About ▾

Programs ▾

Grants ▾

Research ▾

News and Press

Studio of the Americas, LLC
(USA)

COUNTRY FOCUS

USA

PROGRAM AREA

Cessation Education

APPROVAL DATE

August 2024

**San Diego State University
Research Foundation (USA)**

COUNTRY FOCUS

USA

PROGRAM AREA

Health and Science Research

APPROVAL DATE

May 2023

Urban Institute (USA)

COUNTRY FOCUS

USA

PROGRAM AREA

Health and Science Research

APPROVAL DATE

May 2024

Cornell University (USA)

Take an economic approach to study consumer decisions about smoking, use of tobacco harm reduction products, and quitting. To be conducted using discrete choice experiments, with the goal of contributing to the evidence base for well-considered regulation of tobacco harm reduction products in the United

ECLAT SRL (Italy)

Establish and strengthen a center for research on the acceleration of tobacco harm reduction

COUNTRY FOCUS

Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Oman, Serbia,
USA

GAES is a grant-giving non-profit foundation, based in the USA, which was fully funded by PMI. Currently still operating with left over funds from PMI

Ref: <https://www.tobaccotactics.org/article/global-action-to-end-smoking/>

Source: [https://globalactiontoendsmoking.org/grants/search/?country=usa&status of work=active](https://globalactiontoendsmoking.org/grants/search/?country=usa&status%20of%20work=active)

Scholarship to Individuals to Promote Tobacco Harm Reduction

THRSP Tobacco Harm Reduction
Scholarship Programme



**KAC: 123 scholars
in 45 countries;
Funded by PMI**

The THRSP is a truly global programme.

So far, 123 scholars have been based in the 45 countries shown on the map above. Look below for just a few of their achievements to date.

ARMENIA	AFGHANISTAN	BANGLADESH	BOTSWANA	BRAZIL	BULGARIA
BURKINA FASO	CAMEROON	COLOMBIA	COSTA RICA	DRC	ETHIOPIA
ESTONIA	GERMANY	GHANA	GREECE	INDIA	IRELAND
ITALY	JAMAICA	KAZAKHSTAN	KYRGYZSTAN	KENYA	LATVIA
LITHUANIA	MALAWI	MALAYSIA	MEXICO	MOLDOVA	NEPAL
NETHERLANDS	NEW ZEALAND	NIGERIA	NORWAY	PAKISTAN	POLAND
PORTUGAL	ROMANIA	SWEDEN	TANZANIA	UK	USA
UGANDA	UZBEKISTAN	ZAMBIA			

Knowledge Action Change (UK) has received 9 grants from FSFW/GAES between 2017 – 2025

Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index: Halting Industry Participation In Policy Development



Industry lobby to accept e-cigarettes has intensified

TI pressured countries to embrace e-cigs, nicotine devices and pouches, and flavored products.

- Try to revoke bans through court cases
- weaken regulations
- oppose and delay tax increases of these products
- lobby policymakers to pass laws favorable to industry

Governments Pushed Back on Industry Pressure

- Over **40 countries** have banned e-cigs and HTPs, including the **Cabo Verde, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mauritius** and **Uganda**.

GGTC FACT SHEET

E-CIGARETTE BAN & REGULATION:
Global Status as of May 2025

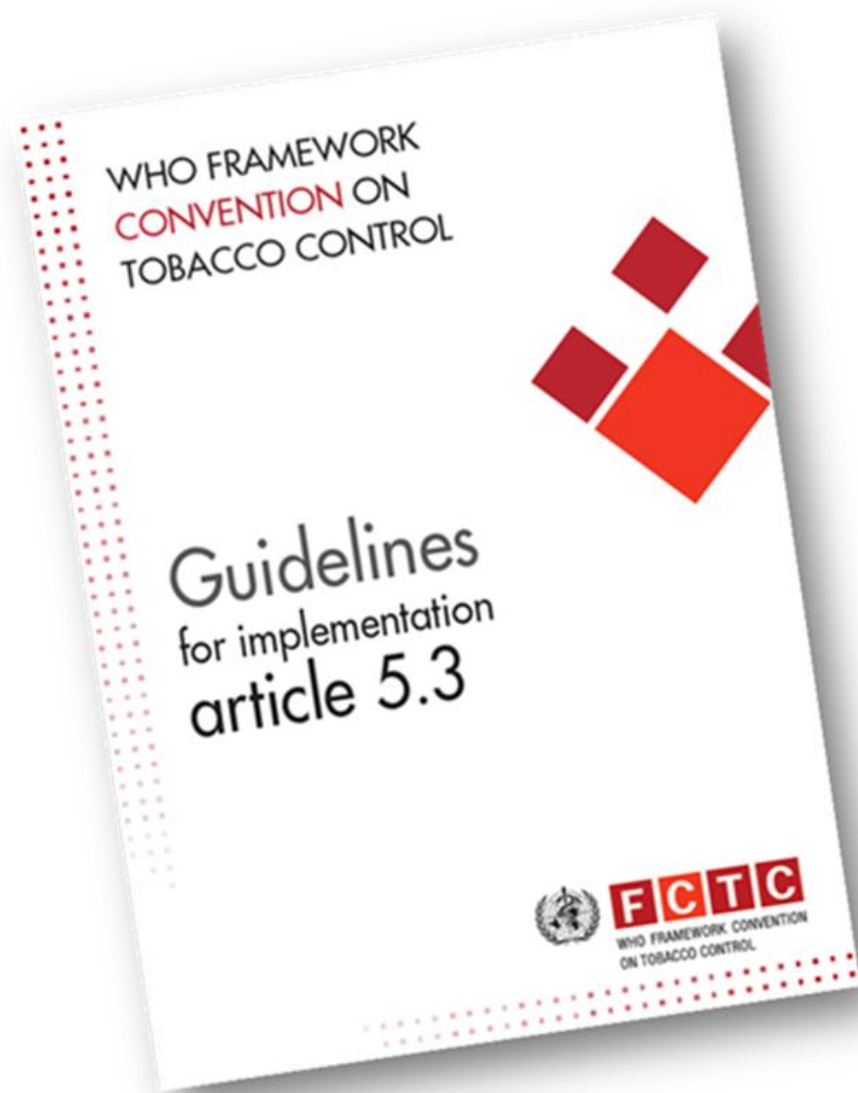


B. 46 COUNTRIES BAN SALE OF E-CIGARETTES: ^[5]

The sale/distribution of e-cigarettes is banned in the following forty-six (46) countries:

Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chile*, Colombia*, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt*, Ethiopia, Gambia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan**, Kuwait*, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon*, Malaysia, Maldives**, Marshall Islands**, Mauritius, Mexico, Nicaragua, Norway, occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Palau**, Panama, Papua New Guinea**, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Vietnam**.*

WHO FCTC Article 5.3



Article 5.3 Guidelines
adopted in 2008

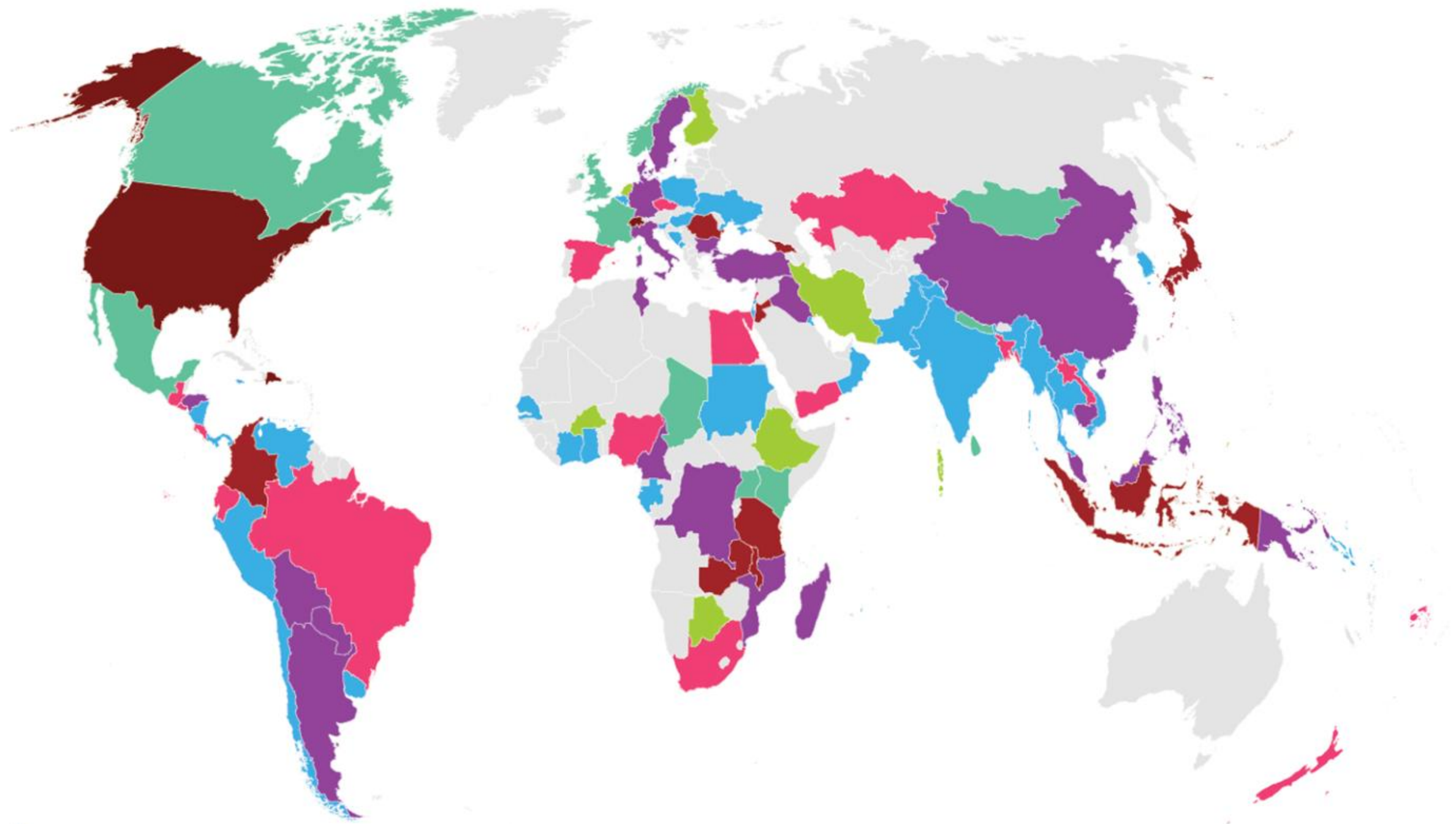
“In setting and implementing their public health policies with respect to tobacco control, Parties shall act to **protect these policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry** in accordance with national law.”

7 Indicators

- TI is not a partner in policy development
- Denormalize CSR activities
- Not give benefits to the TI
- Avoid unnecessary interaction, reject partnership
- Ensure transparency
- Avoid conflict of interest
- Limits interactions to only when strictly necessary

Index 2025: Tobacco industry interference increased, more aggressive

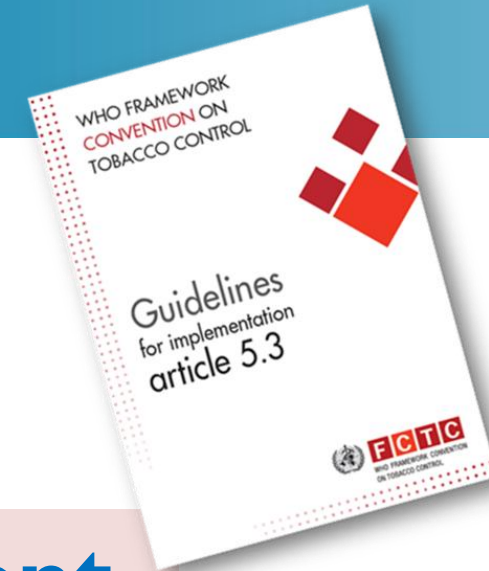
100 countries surveyed



Key Finding

- TI more aggressive, exploited policy loopholes, dissuaded, enticed, frustrated governments across the globe in their efforts to protect public health
- Non-health departments and policy makers targeted

Countries with Good Practice in Article 5.3



Legislation that include Art 5.3 component

- Gabon: Ordinance No. 0020/PR/2026 of Feb 26, 2026, Chap VIII
- Botswana: Tobacco Control Act 2021
- Uganda: Tobacco Control Act 2015
- Chad Decret N° 1523 / PR/ MSP / 2019
- Kenya: Tobacco Control Regulation 2014: Part V
- Ethiopia: Proclamation No. 1112/2019 - Article 51(5)

Circulars/ Directives/Code on Art 5.3: whole of govt

Australia

Brunei

Canada

Costa Rica

Philippines

Netherlands

Norway

Thailand

U.K.

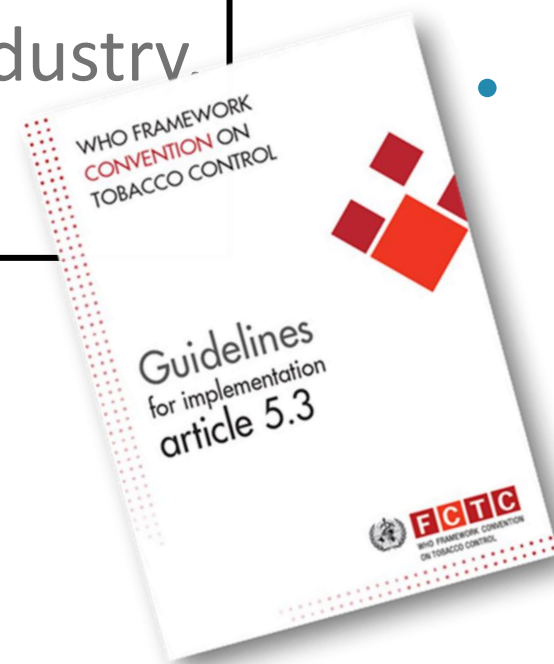
Protective Measures

Code Across whole Govt

- **Brunei:** Full Article 5.3 compliance, transparent conduct.
- **Philippines:** Code of Conduct applicable to all government officials and employees
- **Lao PDR:** The 2021 amended Tobacco Control Law prohibits engagement with the tobacco industry.

Guidelines within the MOH

- **Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Thailand**
- **Cambodia:** MoEYS
- **Brunei, Cambodia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand:** bans acceptance of gifts and contributions from the TI.
- **Thailand, Korea, Pakistan:** registration and submission of information from the tobacco industry.



Conclusion: TI is a Growing Threat

- **Pervasive Industry Interference:** Despite progress in some countries, the majority of the 24 countries surveyed continue to struggle with evolving tactics from both international and domestic tobacco companies.
- **Targeting Non-Health Sectors:** The tobacco industry exploits loopholes in non-health sectors, who are often under-resourced and vulnerable to influence.
- **Harm Reduction as a Business Tactic:** Tobacco companies are pivoting to new nicotine products (e-cigarettes, HTPs) under the guise of “transformation” while simultaneously working to preserve cigarette sales.

Conclusions: TI Interference is a Growing Threat

- **Critical Governance Gaps**
 - **Transparency:** Most countries lack public registries for lobbyists and fail to disclose government-industry interactions.
 - **Conflicts of interest:** “Revolving door” relationships between government and the TI, and State ownership of tobacco enterprises, remain deeply rooted
- **CSR as a Gateway:** Industry-led CSR is systematically used to forge ties with key government bodies and legitimize the industry’s presence in policy spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Ban tobacco industry CSR activities



Revoke preferential treatment and incentives



Restrict interactions with TI to only when strictly necessary



Avoid conflicts of interest



Ensure transparency and accountability



Strengthen legal and policy framework



Adopt and enforce a Code of Conduct across whole govt



SEATCA Tobacco Industry Monitoring
Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance

[Home](#)

[Tobacco in ASEAN](#)

[Tobacco industry](#)

[Industry tactics](#)

[Tobacco harm reduction](#)

[SEATCA](#)

[TobaccoWatch](#)

Tobacco Industry Monitor

The Tobacco Industry (TI) Monitor provides comprehensive information on TI interference in the ten ASEAN countries. Our team of tobacco control advocates and researchers works across the region to observe, document, expose, and counteract tobacco industry tactics.

<https://timonitor.seatca.org/>



Thank you!