Tobacco Control Data Initiative

Curbing Tobacco Industry Interference in Nigeria:

Strengthening Transparency, Regulation, and Policy Integrity

March 2026

Executive Summary

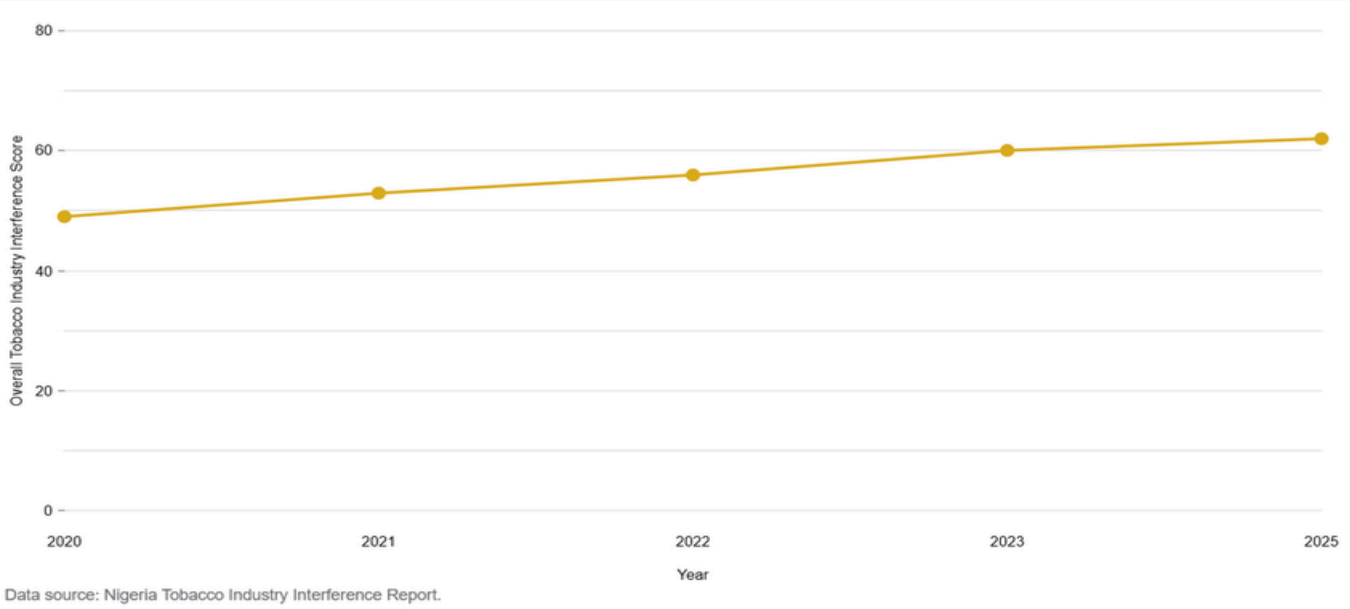
Tobacco industry interference in Nigeria is increasing, as reflected in the rising Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) Index score. Despite existing control measures, evidence shows that the industry uses coordinated strategies, including policy influence, corporate social responsibility initiatives, third-party advocacy, and targeted marketing, to shape public opinion and weaken regulation. Nigeria's growing and diversifying tobacco market further strengthens the industry's capacity to influence policy and expand consumption. These practices undermine compliance with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC), particularly provisions aimed at protecting public health policies from commercial interests. Addressing these challenges requires stronger transparency mechanisms, stricter regulation of industry engagement, and full exclusion of the tobacco industry from policymaking processes. Implementing these measures will help safeguard public health, strengthen governance, and improve the effectiveness of tobacco control efforts.

Rising Tobacco Industry Interference in Nigeria

- The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control requires countries to protect public health policies from interference by the tobacco industry and other vested interests.
- In Nigeria, evidence shows that tobacco industry interference is increasing, as reflected in the rise of the Global Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) Index score from 49 in 2020 to 62 in 2025 (see Figure 1).
- This upward trend indicates that the tobacco industry is intensifying its efforts to influence policy and regulatory processes, despite existing tobacco control measures.
- The tobacco industry employs a wide range of coordinated tactics at both global and national levels to weaken public health policies, including:

    - Use of digital platforms: Leveraging social media and online channels to circumvent advertising restrictions and directly target young people.
    - Sponsorship of sports and events: Supporting sports activities to increase brand visibility and promote tobacco use, particularly among youth.
    - Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives: Funding projects such as school infrastructure, scholarships, and youth programmes to build a positive public image and gain public influence.
    - Misleading campaigns and marketing strategies: Promoting youth-focused anti-smoking or anti-e-cigarette campaigns that are misleading, while using pricing strategies (such as single-stick sales) to increase affordability and access.
    - Discrediting scientific evidence: Funding and disseminating biased research and commentary to undermine established evidence on the health risks of tobacco use.
    - Influencing legislative and regulatory processes: Attempting to shape policy decisions by emphasising economic contributions, lobbying policymakers, and in some cases threatening legal action.

Figure 1: Trends in Tobacco Industry Interference Index for Nigeria



Data source: Nigeria Tobacco Industry Interference Report.

Evolving Tobacco Market Structure in Nigeria

- Nigeria remains a major tobacco production and distribution hub in Africa, serving both domestic consumption and export markets. Its large population and access to regional markets continue to make it attractive to global tobacco companies.
- Recent evidence from the Nigeria Tobacco Industry Interference report highlights shifts in market concentration and increasing competition among tobacco firms.
- Key trends include:
  - British American Tobacco (BAT) remains the dominant player, although its market share declined from 78.6 percent in 2016 to 65.4 percent in 2025, indicating reduced dominance.
  - International Tobacco Company experienced a sharp decline, with its market share falling from 16.5 percent in 2016 to 0.1 percent in 2025.
  - Japan Tobacco International (JTI) has expanded its presence, with market share increasing from 14.6 percent in 2016 to 17.5 percent in 2025.
  - Korea Tobacco and Ginseng Corporation (KT&G) recorded notable growth, with its share rising from 3.7 percent in 2016 to 7.0 percent in 2025.
  - Philip Morris International Nigeria Limited also increased its market share from 1.8 percent in 2016 to 3.8 percent in 2025.
  - The share of other tobacco companies grew significantly from 0.7 percent in 2016 to 6.2 percent in 2025, suggesting increasing market entry and competition.
  - Overall, the market is becoming more diversified, with multiple firms expanding their footprint.
- These trends indicate a growing and increasingly competitive tobacco market, which may further intensify industry efforts to influence policy and regulatory processes in Nigeria.

Evidence of Tobacco Industry Interference in Nigeria

- Evidence across Nigeria's governance landscape highlights the continued and evolving influence of the tobacco industry, underscoring the need for stronger policy action.

- Key instances include:



Policy interference

In 2020, the industry proposed policies on conventional tobacco and alternative products, in violation of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Article 5.3, which requires governments to limit engagement with the tobacco industry to protect public health policies.



Manipulation of public opinion

The British American Tobacco Nigeria Foundation (BATNF) uses corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, such as the commissioning of solar-powered boreholes in Enugu State in 2024, to build public goodwill and influence policymakers, potentially weakening support for stricter tobacco control measures.



Use of third-party groups

Industry-linked groups, including the Business Renaissance Group (BRG) and Sustainable Development Collective (SDC), have been used to oppose tobacco tax increases, masking direct industry involvement.



Targeting vulnerable populations

The industry uses gendered and youth-focused marketing strategies, promoting flavoured, slim, and discreet products to attract women and young people and bypass social and cultural resistance.

Policy Recommendations

To curb rising tobacco industry interference and protect public health policies, the following priority actions should be implemented:

- **Strengthen transparency and accountability (FCTC Article 5.3):** Establish a mandatory, publicly accessible register for all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to disclose interactions with the tobacco industry and its affiliates. Enforce strict penalties for non-compliance and conflicts of interest, in line with relevant provisions of the National Tobacco Control Act.
- **Eliminate industry influence and incentives:** Prohibit all government institutions from engaging in or endorsing tobacco industry corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, which are used to shape public opinion and gain policy access. Sustain tobacco tax increases and restrict duty-free access to reduce affordability.
- **Counter industry marketing and interference tactics:** Introduce and enforce regulations to ban flavoured products, youth- and gender-targeted packaging (e.g., slim designs), and digital marketing practices that circumvent existing tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) restrictions.
- **Strengthen subnational implementation of tobacco control:** Empower state and local governments with the legal authority, resources, and capacity to enforce tobacco control measures, ensuring wider coverage and reducing industry influence at all levels.
- **Safeguard policy and regulatory processes:** Ensure that the tobacco industry is excluded from all policy development and regulatory decision-making processes, eliminating both direct and indirect channels of influence.

For references and more information on tobacco industry interference in Nigeria, visit https://nigeria.tobaccocontroldata.org/en/home/industry-interference/#ref_16\